Portraits of Otherness:
Arabs and Muslims in *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*

by

Nujood Kheshaifaty

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA) in Humanities

The Faculty of Graduate Studies
Laurentian University
Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

THESIS DEFENCE COMMITTEE/COMITÉ DE SOUTENANCE DE THÈSE
Laurentian Université/Université Laurentienne
Faculty of Graduate Studies/Faculté des études supérieures

Title of Thesis Titre de la thèse	Portraits of Otherness: Arabs and Muslims in Homeland and Little Mosque on the Prairie
Name of Candidate Nom du candidat	Kheshaifaty, Nujood
Degree Diplôme	Master of Arts
Department/Program Département/Programme	Humanities
Date of Defence Date de la soutenance	March 7, 2019

APPROVED/APPROUVÉ

Thesis Examiners/Examinateurs de thèse:

Dr. Hoi Cheu
(Supervisor/Directeur de thèse)

Dr. Jennifer Johnson
(Committee member/Membre du comité)

Dr. Mark Scott
(Committee member/Membre du comité)

Dr. John McCullough
(External Examiner/Examinateur externe)

Approved for the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Approuvé pour la Faculté des études supérieures
Dr. David Lesbarrères
Monsieur David Lesbarrères
Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Doyen, Faculté des études supérieures

ACCESSIBILITY CLAUSE AND PERMISSION TO USE

Abstract

The U.S. media has often projected Muslims and Arabs in the West negatively, especially after the 9/11 attacks. The negativity identifies Arabs as the "other." Through numerous symbols of difference, the U.S media helps to create a clear "us versus them" binary imposing homogeneous images of Muslims as "terrorists," "patriarchal abusers of women," and "tyrants." Drawing from literature in religious and gender studies in the framework of Marxist-psychoanalysis, this thesis analyzes the American political thriller *Homeland* (2011) in contrast to the Canadian sitcom *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (2007). Written by a Muslim woman, *Little Mosque* creates humors out of the conflicting and complicated diversities and realities of being Muslim, while *Homeland* demonizes Arabs and Muslims. By employing Žižek's concepts in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, I explore how fantasies shapes human society. Žižek's analyses help to clarify the idea that people's fantasies are the basis of popular cultures. These fantasies in turn shape the society's biases and these biases shape individuals' conceptions. However, while *Homeland* reinforces the racist ideology and fantasy, *Little Mosque* challenges it. *Little Mosque* converts the standard monochromatic stereotypes into a diverse mosaic, thereby moving Muslims from the realm of static otherness to one of dynamic conflicts.

Keywords:

The "other", Media, Arabs, Muslims, Islam, Misrepresentation, Stereotypes, Gender, Terrorism.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Hoi Cheu for providing guidance, support and feedback throughout this research. His comments, advice and correction helped me in every step during this research and writing the thesis. I appreciate his knowledge and expertise in many areas. He has been so patient and understanding to all of the circumstances that I went through. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my MA study.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Mark Scott and Dr. Jennifer Johnson for their encouragement, valuable comments and suggestions. Their insightful feedback from various perspectives widen my research. Their guidance has served me well and I am so thankful. I am so blessed to work with dynamic and intelligent committee members.

I would like to give my biggest thanks to my loving and supportive husband, Ali Zari, and my wonderful boys Talal and Yousef who accompanied us in this journey. Thank you, Ali, for always being beside me whenever I needed you; thank you for being patient and for supporting me throughout writing this thesis. I have faced many struggles with being far away from my parents and having no help during hard times (the delivery of Yousef). I have remained focused on my research and have never given up. Having the help of a good partner has allowed me to overcome the many difficulties that I encountered.

My academic study would never have been possible without the prayer and encouragement of my parents. My father Dr. Hamza Kheshaifaty and my mother Eman Dahlan, who have been supportive of my studies even though I am far away. They raised me with a love of knowledge and supported me in all my pursuits. I shall always be grateful for them.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In September 2009, a new journey began. My husband and I arrived in Montréal, Canada, from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. We came to learn English and to continue our education. The journey has been difficult; Canada and Saudi Arabia have disparate cultures and lifestyles. After a time in Montréal, we moved to Sudbury in 2011. During this period, I experienced a racist incident due to wearing the *hijab*. In particular, a moment that stood out for me was when I was told that I do not belong here. Muslim women have reported similar incidents regarding the *hijab* in particular in the United States and the United Kingdom. For example, in a news story, a man made a racist comment to a woman wearing the *niqab* in a Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf location in Southern California. The man said, "Is this Halloween or something?" "Why did you say that?" the woman asked. "Why wouldn't I?" he replied. Identifying herself as a Muslim, the woman then asked the man what his problem is. "I don't like it, that's why," he says to the woman. "I don't like your religion, it says to kill me — and I don't want to be killed by you. How's that?" The man was not served, because according to the employee, "He's disrupting a public place and being very racist" (Guzman 2018).

Another incident happened where a woman wearing a *burqa* was shopping in Manchester, UK, and heard a middle-aged white man saying to his companion, "Oh, there goes a letterbox". The woman said, "Excuse me, and they just walked off" (Saner 2018). A few days earlier, the former foreign secretary Boris Johnson, in a column for the Daily Telegraph, compared women who wear the *niqab* to "letterboxes" and "bank robbers" (Saner 2018). He said the *burqa* and *niqab* were "odd" and "oppressive," which led to a spike in racist incidents (Saner 2018). Covering one's hair or face would be considered both 'oppressive' to women and 'dangerous' to the West at the same time. These incidents have increased Muslim women's fear

of abuse, harassment and even physical attacks. This kind of experience makes me want to investigate the source of misunderstandings in a culture that prides itself for multiculturalism.

Yasmin Jiwani analyzes the representation of Muslim women through the doubling discourses of the veil in her essay "Doubling discourses and the veiled Other: Mediations of race and gender in Canadian media". She emphasizes the "strategic use of the hijab and the burqa as signifiers of the Muslim woman" (55). Jiwani explains the logic on which racism is founded: "(a) self-purification that results in the elimination or physical expulsion of that which is considered a threat; (b) subordination that involves the physical exploitation of Others as cheap sources of labour; and (c) assimilation that entails the destruction of the Other's culture" (57). The media representations of groups that face this racism serve to fortify these foundations, thus creating a never-ending cycle—a cycle of violence which is both symbolic and discursive.

Drawing from Stuart Hall's remarks on the notion of race as "floating signifier," Jiwani distinguishes between representations of Muslim women and the *hijab* "over there" (for example, in Afghanistan) and "over here" (in Canada). She states that, "the veiled Afghan woman, as a symbol of oppression under Taliban Islam on the one hand and a victim of culture on the other, has become a floating signifier. She remains mute in one instance and yet, in another, is the voice ventriloquizing a particular reality that fits Western preoccupation and assumptions" (61). To provide examples of this, Jiwani explores articles published in *The Globe & Mail*. In the articles she examines, "Muslim woman as victim" is a common theme, and the implication is that these victims require saviours, and such implications are used to justify the war in Afghanistan, as an example. Muslim women are also used as bits of evidence in the articles examined to prove that countries like Canada allow fundamentalist Islam to thrive. According to Jiwani, "the veil itself has become an iconic sign of difference, but one that is

reified to the extent that its strategic use, within Western ways of seeing, veils the intentions or motivations of the definer" (60). The veil becomes a threatening symbol, creating a fear of "engulfing Islam"—something that must be controlled.

After the incident that happened to me, I asked: why do we (people around me, including myself) judge each other by our preconceived notions of religion, nationality or country of origin? Although these personal experiences motivate my own work, and these observations represent my own ideas, I realize they are connected to my experience in Canada as a Muslim and *hijabi* woman. During my stay in Canada as an undergraduate Communication student, I have watched many different films and television programs. Media has become a major source that shapes people's perception of reality, so it is possible that our misunderstandings and racist assumptions about each other come from media representations mistaken as reality.

One television series that captivated my attention was *Homeland*, and watching this series marked the beginning of my interest in the subject of media representation. The media and specifically TV shows play a major role in portraying Arabs and Muslims. In general, the visual representation of Arabs and Muslims in North America often presents the majority of Muslims as 'terrorists,' backward thinking people, or as dangerous to the West. However, alternative views also exist and discourses happen from producer to producer, corporation to corporation, and country to country.

By using cultural analysis, my thesis examines the American TV series *Homeland*, comparing it to the Canadian sitcom, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. Žižek's psychoanalytic concept of the Other provides a framework to explore and complicate the concept of Otherness in media, particularly the stereotypical portrayal of Arabs/Muslims. I argue that *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* are part of a cultural shift in how Muslims/Arabs and Islam are

portrayed. *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* are public fantasies that reinforce and shape public perceptions. I argue that U.S. media misrepresentation of Muslims reinforces deleterious stereotypes and function to "other" Islam and its adherents. The notion of homogenization and a misreading of Islam have been strongly related to the treatment of terrorism in the U.S. media. Similarly, a conception of how all Muslim men and women behave has been created and repeated *ad nauseum*, to the point that it is now seen as reality in the Western world, through stereotypical representations based on misconceptions. However, alternative views exist. Analyzed as contrasting cultural materials, *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* represent two different streams in racial and cultural discourses.

In order to explore these questions, I focus on the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in *Homeland*, and the changes in the portrayals from season one through to season six. Moreover, I examine how *Little Mosque on the Prairie* portrays a Muslim community co-mingling with different cultures living in Canada. The reason that I have chosen to analyze *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is that these series are both exciting in different ways, and both have focused on portraying Muslims/Arabs in ways that deviate from the norm, challenging stereotyping of Muslims. The comparison of the two shows is important because it conceptualizes the language of political ideology, Canada vs. U.S. The ideology of the Canadian sitcom *Little Mosque*, for example, comes from both the government (the Canadian public broadcast institute) and the cultural context. While *Homeland* imposes the conservative American right wing ideology produced by Fox 21.

My thesis is limited to an analysis of the series *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* in their portrayals and representations of places, people and things. I am conscious of how other television series in the Western world represent Arabs and Muslims in ways that are

different from the manner they are represented in these two series. The sample analyzed here is as an introduction to the much broader subject.

Chapter 1

Flashpoints in the Construction of Muslim Identity in the West

On September 11, 2001, nineteen men associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial airplanes headed for Los Angeles and San Francisco (Peek 17). Two of the hijacked aircraft attacked the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, with the third hitting the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and the fourth hijacked plane crashing down in a field in Pennsylvania (16). The first two hijacked aircraft brought down the World Trade Center's 110-story twin towers and caused the partial or entire down-fall of seven other buildings in the financial district of lower Manhattan (18). The leader of al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, along with the nineteen members who claimed to practice Islam, were responsible for this terrorist attack.

This terrorist attack claimed the lives of more than 2,602 civilians. As a result of this attack, "Arab and Muslim Americans became the targets of hate crimes, harassments and government surveillance" (Peek 22). The victims of hate crimes were from different ethnic backgrounds, including Arabs, Sikhs and African-Americans, and the reaction of the Bush administration was to denounce these crimes that were happening all over the U.S.A, (Ibrahim 116). Despite this official stance against hate crimes, the U.S. Department of Justice still decided to conduct an investigation with Islamic groups as its focus—in fact, it was the largest investigation of its kind in the country's history. It was not just individuals who gave cause for suspicion that were investigated; someone simply being Muslim was enough to spur an investigation, and mosques and Islamic schools were also scrutinized (Ibid). Many Arab and Muslim people suffered; they were questioned, arrested, deported, detained, and excessively held up at airports (Peek 6). The 9/11 attacks are considered one of the most unforgettable events in

history as an unjustified act, with repercussions reaching beyond the deaths of American citizens. After all, it does not only affected the way in which Arabs and Muslims are perceived in the West, but it also has significant impacts on how they are treated on a daily basis.

In Canada, there has been considerable press and television coverage of several events that has affected Arabs and Muslims since 9/11. For example, a study found that 60% of Muslims reported that "they experienced bias or discrimination since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, with fully a third saying their lives had worsened since 9/11, that they felt Canadians disliked them and that they were concerned about their own and their families' safety" (Perry and Poynting 156). In fact, even children with names similar to the Arab-sounding names appeared on the no-fly lists after 9/11 were affected. For example, an 18-month old Canadian boy Sebastian Khan "has been held up at the border since he was six weeks old" (Glover 2018). The reason is that his name "matched someone on a national security list" (Ibid). However, this child is not the only one who has this problem. Khan and many other families across the country facing the same situation "have mobilized to get the federal government to establish an appeals process to prevent innocent people from getting stopped at the border" (Ibid). Similarly, Yusuf Ahmed Khan, who is 20-years-old, has been held up at the airport since he was a little boy. Khan's name "matches someone deemed a security risk" (Ibid). It is important to note that for toddlers, the impact is significant and bothersome (and racist) but, for young people, these longstanding impacts become very dangerous.

Just like the vast majority of women in Saudi Arabia, I was born and raised as a Muslim woman exposed to Islamic teaching, sharing similar practices, customs, traditions, theology and rituals. My moderate family taught me that Islam calls for modesty. Khaled Abou El Fadl describes moderate Muslims as "individuals who believe in the five pillars of Islam, and who

accept the inherited Islamic tradition, but who modify certain aspects of that tradition in order to fulfill the ultimate moral objectives of the faith in the modern age" (106). When I moved to Canada in 2009 to study, it was challenging; I felt like an outsider, or the "other". Based on the stories of my friends and testimonies that I read, I know that my experience is not unique. Muslim women living in the west often struggles in the beginning to balance the Islamic religion and the new culture, and some women choose not to wear the *hijab* in order to fit in with the western life.

The answer for some moderate Muslims like myself, however, is not to change ourselves just to fit in. The only change to be made is not one made just to fit in, but a change to be better. According to the Quran, "Indeed, God will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (13:11). Change can be in the form of becoming a better citizen—one that is concerned with creating a united, cohesive relationship with people of all viewpoints and backgrounds.

Canada has been known for its multicultural and multiethnic nature; it is seen globally as a place where people from different backgrounds, ethnic origins and beliefs coexist peacefully. This idea has been deliberately constructed and promoted through decades of federal policy in Canada. Multiculturalism is now a notable part of Canadian identity and has even been officially pronounced by the state as a part of its administrative apparatus (Bannerji 8). Multiculturalism shapes the policy and agenda settings of various private and public organizations, and in turn, the ideal is taken for granted as a social-political reality. It becomes an "ideology" (I am using this term after Žižek's theory, which I will explain in details in Chapter 3).

According to Bannerji "Canadian official multiculturalism has developed through the 1970s and 80s, and has become in the 90s a major part of Canadian political discourse

and electoral organization" (8). In its multicultural paradigm, Canadians admit to (and are supposed to celebrate) the differences between its citizens, and deep-seated differences of ethnic cultures are meant to be a point of pride (9). Bannerji discusses the fact that "diversity has become a commonplace word in our political and cultural world" (35). She goes on to criticize the idea that Canada has been successful at creating a welcoming multicultural society, arguing that multiculturalism is sometimes a veneer for diminishing or reducing different cultures to stereotypes at best and racist and exclusionary practices at worst. In other words, she says that multiculturalism has a threshold for how 'different' we are allowed to be – although Muslim, but do not demonstrate this overtly by wearing a headscarf (for example). The notion of a unified community and ethno-cultural pluralities are now certainly not mutually exclusive concepts, and many different Canadian organizations have encouraged this merging of ideas. On June 27, 2019, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau issued a statement to emphasize the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Multiculturalism act:

> As the first country in the world to adopt a policy of multiculturalism, Canada has shown time and time again that diversity and inclusion are sources of strength, and at the heart of our success. One-fifth of Canadians are born elsewhere and chose to immigrate to Canada…. Canada is successful and prosperous because generation after generation of Canadians have embraced this task, and challenged themselves, and each other, to broaden our understanding of what it means to be an open, compassionate, and accepting country. (Statement by the Prime Minister 2018)

Multiculturalism is a liberal Canadian position, which is accepted generally as part of the Canadian identity. However, is it the everyday reality? Can people believe that they are

multicultural and therefore not racist, while discriminating against other cultures and peoples? Is it possible that the belief that Canada is infallibly multicultural can become a barrier in which people get harder to see their racist assumptions about others?

One example of the ways in which multiculturalism in Canada has struggled to be inclusive of multiple faiths and cultures includes the contemporary widespread reactions to some Muslim women's choice to cover their heads. The wearing of the *hijab* (headscarf) is covering the head (not to be confused with the *niqab,* which covers most of the face or the *burqa,* which covers the entire head and women see through a mesh screen). The *hijab* has become a minority practice in countries where the vast majority of people are non-Muslim.

Often, wearing the *hijab* has resulted in prejudiced reactions against women who wear them. These reactions are usually held by those who assume that women wearing the *hijab* must be oppressed, devout, traditional or conservative. Many Westerners view the wearing of the *hijab* as a glaring sign of the submissive role that women must play within the Islamic belief system (Muñoz 2002), rather than as a sign of a women's right to choose how to present themselves, and as a sign of religious belief. However, the idea of covering the head comes from early Christians, drawn from the New Testament,

> But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. (1 Corinthians 11:5-10)

Here, woman who joins worship with uncovered head, such as veil, is considered dishonoured. It is describes as if her head was shaved, as scandalous. The long hair of a woman was her glory according to the early Christian text of Corinthians.

The *hijab,* contrary to ignorant belief, is a symbol of women's piety, modesty, dignity, respect, and chastity, over which she is meant to have control. According to Hoodfar, "the veil is a powerful symbol that communicates loudly and clearly to society at large and to husbands in particular that the wearer is bound by the Islamic idea of her gender role" (119). Although Hoodfar does not wear the veil, because she does not perceive it to be obligatory but rather traditional, she supports a woman's choice to cover her head and argues that wearing a veil does not particularly suggest oppression. In the West, women who wear the *hijab* should expect and demand their Islamic rights, even in non-Muslim countries.

Muslim feminists have multiple views regarding the *hijab*. These complexities are rarely portrayed in the media. It is important to understand the complexity of this practice. Many Muslim feminists support women's choice to wear the headscarf; however, there are also those who support the ban of the headscarf. For example, French feminist activist Muslim Fadela Amara's view is that the veil has become a tool of cultural conformity for some women. Amara is an Algerian immigrant. When she was 18, her brother was hit and killed by a drunk driver and the police sided with the driver, most likely due to racism. She fought for social justice, especially for Algerians and Muslim women (Erlanger 2008). In her view, the headscarf is a symbol of "a militant Islam that poses a danger to French democracy" ("The Veil and a New Muslim Identity"). She believes that for many women it is a sign of identity; however, her explanation is that "some of them wear the headscarf by choice in the spirit of religious practice. But others have been subjected to pressures...from parents, religious leaders, or the people in the

housing projects" ("The Veil and a New Muslim Identity"). She then differentiates between various categories of young women who wear the headscarf. In her opinion, "there are those who wear it because they believe that the fact that they practice their religion affords them a legitimate existence… They wear the headscarf as a banner. But there are many young women who, forbidden any outward display of femininity, wear the headscarf as armor, supposed to protect them from male aggression" ("The Veil and a New Muslim Identity"). Here, she clarifies that some women deeply believe that the headscarf is a religious practice while others wear the headscarf as armor, to avoid being bothered by men.

Alternatively, there is also a strong support for the wearing of the headscarf. Amani Al-Khatahtbeh, for example, a Muslim feminist and the author of the biography *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age*, as well as the founder of the online magazine MuslimGirl.com, is determined to change women's perceptions of *hijabis*. According to her,

> We're told that the headscarf is oppressive to women, but I find wearing it liberating. This is my rejection of the male gaze. It's me saying, "No. I have control over my body, I get to decide how much of it I want to show people." What people don't realise is that Islam is founded on the principles of gender equality. Women started wearing the headscarf to elevate themselves in a society where they were so objectified they were essentially treated like furniture. By wearing it, they insisted on being valued for their minds rather than for their bodies. ("LadyBeard Magazine")

The headscarf can also be a symbol to control women bodies. The U.S. media have often intervened for their own purposes, making the gendered expression of faith/culture a way of controlling "others." Fox News is one example of how they mislead storyline about women who wear the *hijab* such as the headline "France is brave and right to ban the Burqa" (Chesler 2015).

For me, wearing the *hijab* is a way of defining myself as a Muslim woman in a Western country. The *hijab* truly is the strongest symbol of our distinct identities, based on its hyper-visibility and unmistakable nature. It stands out and is a proud marker of our unique culture and religion. Living in Canada for more than eight years, I have had my share of negative experiences in which my choice of wearing the *hijab* has resulted in people displaying prejudice towards me. A couple of years ago my *hijabi* friends and I were accosted by a stranger who exclaimed that we should not be wearing such things because they did not belong in Canada, and that we have to go back to our country because we ourselves are not wanted here. She then acted as if we were carrying guns (i.e., that we were terrorists). The situation was terrifying and left me with a feeling of being rejected and hated. Indeed, it was a depressing sensation to feel that we, as Muslims, are not welcome in Canada. It led me to question why we are judged by where we come from, and what our personal religious beliefs are. I think what empowered this woman to attack me is probably due to the negative stereotypes and misconception of Muslim women shared across the Western media. This incident would not be much different if a man attacked me instead of a woman as seen through the previous examples of similar incidents happening to Muslim women.

The experience highlighted that my existence as both a woman and as a Muslim shapes how the world perceives me and reacts to me. I wondered if, had my attire been different, would there have been a different response. It is reasonable to consider that had my friends and I not been wearing the *hijab,* we might not have been accosted. In *The Dark Side of the Nation,* Himani Bannerji explores "visible minorities," or "non-white" people living in Canada specifically since the 1960s, as an insider and outsider. She said the identity of the Canadian "does not reside in language, religion or other aspects of culture, but rather in the

European/North American physical origin-in the body and colour of skin" (42). Non-white people or brown skinned are the most vulnerable to racist attacks and harassment. The *hijab* allows people to identify the "other" and react with their prejudice against a group of people with no reservations, sometimes by concealing it as concern for oppressed women, and often as fear of the growth of some other form of religion. After the incident, my husband suggested that I wear a winter hat or turban style from time to time, instead of the headscarf, which is another way of covering the head. It is a kind of religious ambiguity for Muslim women, which could be seen as trendy and fashionable rather than religious.

Some negative comments regarding the *hijab* are a result of prejudice against a minority, but the less obvious prejudices come in the form of a Western-centric perspective that seems to demand a level of conformity to the dominant culture. Prejudice against a group of people (Muslims) is manifested in the Western media, and indeed, in how we treat each other. For example, there was the story of a Montréal woman "who was asked by a Court of Québec judge to remove her *hijab* during a hearing in 2015" (Rukavina 2016). It is an unfortunate fact that over time, repeated actions of prejudice often affect victims on an unconscious level. Apparently, there is no room for Muslim women to express ourselves without being concerned about how we will be perceived. Recently, the Québec government passed a law banning facial coverings such as the *niqab* or *burqa* when using public transit or government services (Hamilton 2017). Coordinator of the Ligue des droits et libertés (a human rights defense group) Nicole Filion cautions that this law will "have a discriminatory effect on religious groups who are targeted, in particular women" (Ibid). According to Macfarlane, "the new law is neither neutral nor constitutional. It is impossible to reconcile this law as anything other than the targeting of a minority group, a slightly narrower spin on the now perennial Quebec debate over the wearing of

(non-Catholic) religious identifiers" (Macfarlane 2017). These examples suggest that the Othering of non-Western women through public services is insidious.

I have had positive experiences in Canada which serve to show that a large portion of Canadians display positive, non-racist worldviews. I have interacted with several hundred people who have all been kind and polite and showed not a trace of prejudice. I specifically remember a couple of months ago; I was sitting in a coffee place with my husband, while an older couple was asking us a couple of questions about our country of origin. Then the man said, "If ever, anyone would say anything about your headscarf, tell them to go to hell!" I am glad that there are people curious about other cultures and appreciate our differences. More importantly, nevertheless, his comments show a conflicting divide among people in Canada. A national identity is one thing, and a cultural discourse is another. Prejudices are in the discourse.

It is important to consider the complex question of the origin of racial and religious prejudices. How do these perspectives arise, and where are these attitudes cultivated? Popular culture and media, I argue, originate, reinforce, and re-inscribe many prejudices, perhaps unintentionally. Viewing television shows and other forms of media can lead to audiences absorbing political, cultural and social messages that are assumed in the programs. According to Abdulsalam, "many people worldwide rely heavily upon the media as their main source of information and knowledge" (35). Thus, "the media has the power to change and manipulate the inner beliefs, moral convictions, and personal opinions of the public at large" (35). The media, to be sure, has the ability to manipulate the news and is famous for its partial truths (37). Malcolm X once said "The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power" ("Thought and Mind Control" 2007). Unfortunately, the U.S. media has portrayed Arabs and Muslims in a negative light, and

"this is due to the issues of race, color and immigration" (39). As Buliett noted with reference to Anderson, "the media tend to dramatize, over-generalize and over-hype the threat of Islam, creating the possibility that people will begin to deem a general terrorism threat of Islam without the existence of evidence" (Anderson et al. 6). To the critical observer, it is obvious that the U.S. media is not presenting a true picture of Islam to Western viewers.

According to Ibrahim, "Muslims living in Europe and the US have become accustomed to the media consistently choosing to perpetuate dominant images of aggression over images of diversity and assimilation" (111). The American media "fueled hysterical fear and violence, and focused on crisis coverage" of the 9/11 attacks (112). The media was largely responsible for the way American citizens ultimately felt after 9/11, through incessant news programming and multiple television series, which featured the attacks as a topic. There has since been plenty of research on the media reaction to and representation of the events of 9/11, and how that has shaped public perception of Islam and terrorism, and the connection between the two. It is also because of the history of terrorist attacks in the Middle East, it was easy to build on the narrative connecting Muslims and terrorism. Ultimately, though, our goal must be to fight prejudices and to put a stop to the perpetuation of misconceptions regarding Islam.

The media is a lens through which our views of different peoples are distorted, and which perpetuates harmful misconceptions, which in turn are fodder for war (Al-Khatahtbeh 88). The pieces of narratives, woven by those who desire power and control, are gathered by audiences over time and shape the very way the world is viewed. These texts are powerful, and as they "are dispersed over multiple platforms they also travel across national, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural borders" (Shimpach 55). One example is Trump's recent use of Muslim terrorist attacks in Egypt as a reason for building a wall at the Mexican-US border. He claims that the "border will keep

Muslim extremists from crossing into the United States" (Erickson 2017). He uses people's fear to achieve his goal, however unrelated. We can ask ourselves, "What of the transnational storytelling that is pieced together from these travels? And what kind of textual and narrative designs are incorporated into the fabric of programming intended to be multimedia and multinational? Whose mastery, whose control, and whose fantasies are at play in these forms of circulation?" (Shimpach 55). Of course, the people that Shimpach refers to are not all Americans, e.g. not the sympathizer whom I met at the coffee shop. It is a generalization of a relatively uninformed public. Although we still must consider the importance of the creative process and the pleasure that is derived when encountering these narratives, these questions still deserve our serious consideration (Ibid). To answer these questions, I explore the American TV series *Homeland* by Fox 21 and the Canadian CBC situation comedy *Little Mosque on the Prairie.*

Homeland is an American political thriller and drama series based on an adaptation of the Israeli series *Hatufim* ("Prisoners of War"). The creator of *Hatufim* is Gideon Raff, an Israeli film and television director, screenwriter, and writer who was involved in the production of *Homeland*. *Homeland* premiered in 2011, the sixth season airing in 2017, and it has been renewed for the seventh and eighth seasons. The story of *Homeland* is centered on Muslim terrorists and the depiction of different agencies (including the American Central Intelligence Agency) trying to rescue and defend the nation and combat the threat to American soil. In the first three seasons, the series showcases a white American marine named Nicholas Brody. Brody is captured and held prisoner by al-Qaeda until American forces free him after eight years of captivity. The series follows Carrie Mathison, a CIA operative, who suspects that the recently rescued marine has been "turned" by Al-Qaeda. Carrie's aim is to capture Al-Qaeda's leader

Abu-Nazir with the help of the Director of the CIA, Saul Berenson. During the mission of capturing Abu-Nazir (the main foreign enemy), the CIA suspects and investigates many Muslims and Arab nationals. Throughout the series, the viewers come to expect what terrorism might look like and who is behind it.

Conversely, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is a Canadian sitcom about a small, fictional town called Mercy where there is a mosque led by a young man, operating out of a local mainstream church. The title of the show is derived from the 1974 television series, *Little House on the Prairie,* based on a series of novels written by Laura Ingalls Wilder in the 1930s, depicting the story of a white settler family in the 1870s and 80s in Minnesota, United States. The title "Little Mosque" is a deliberate inversion of who counts as a settler and who is "Other." The show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* depicts the challenges that the Muslim community faces as they struggle to co-exist peacefully with their Christian neighbours. The series does not only portray a variety of Muslims; it also recognizes a variety of Christians: the conservative, evangelical radio host on the one hand, and the accepting, liberal Anglican priest on the other. Each episode tackles a different topic that is typically both cultural- and faith-based. There are clashes between the values and traditions of the different communities, and misunderstandings abound. Although the tension between the religious communities leads to competition, the people of the small town of Mercy still manage to tolerate— if not embrace—the differing beliefs of those of a different faith, especially since the beliefs often differ very little. British-born, Canadian-raised Muslim writer Zarqa Nawaz was inspired to create *Little Mosque on the Prairie* while living in Regina, as she spent time observing the lives of members of a religious minority. The show originally broadcast between 2007 and 2012, and consisted of six seasons.

The characters in the show range from feminist doctor Rayyan Hamoudi (who wears a *hijab*) to white "redneck" radio show host Fred Tupper. Muslim café owner Fatima Dinssa is another strong character. Dinssa's sarcasm and rejection of Tupper highlights her strength and lack of submission to white male attention. Amaar Rashid, the mosque's young *imam*, is a liberal Islamist with progressive ideas. These ideas are often defended against manipulative mosque member Baber Siddiqui. Layla, Baber's teenage daughter, is yet another strong woman character who exercises her independence by defying strict Muslim rules of dress and conduct that her father tries to enforce. Sarah and Yasir Hamoudi are a happily married couple who attend the mosque, yet religious concerns are not their top priority.

In this chapter, I discuss the 9/11 attacks and how it affects Arabs and Muslims living in the West (US and Canada). I explore the multiculturalism in Canada with an example of how Canada struggled to be an inclusive such as wearing the *hijab.* I provide my own experience as a *hijabi* woman in the west and the role of the media as a source of information. The analysis of this personal experience contextualizes the main focus of this thesis: media productions like *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* are public fantasies. They both reinforce and shape public perceptions. Before I look further into the complexity of comparing the two vastly different shows, however, I would like to examine the complexity of my own religion first. In the next chapter, I want to focus on the concept of terrorism and its relations to Islam; I provide some examples of recent incidents, as well as the news coverage of those attacks. I look at different thinkers who have different backgrounds and explore the diversity of Islam.

Chapter 2

Islam as the Other: The Religious and Political Context of Cultural Misrepresentations of Muslims in North America

Islam is largely viewed as "Other" in North America, and I have been made aware of this reality since my arrival in Canada in 2009. I have been asked many different questions about my religion and my culture. Most of those who have inquired were unaware of the diversity and plurality of Islam and Muslims. I came to realize that many in the Western world have little understanding about Islam and its nature. It is unfortunate that the Western world has an ideological system that reinforces narrow generalizations of Islam – with all Muslims as terrorists, the whole Islamic civilization as oppressive towards women, and the entire religion as *jihadist*. In this sense, Islam becomes the "Other". This ideology is partially perpetuated by the media misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims in North America, including the biased manner in which violent incidents are reported through media outlets. Some of the North American media distorts the image of Muslims/Islam by portraying the religion as made up of (and making) terrorists, and therefore as a dangerous, frightening "Other". What must be questioned is how we develop and hold onto biases towards others. The goal must be to conceive of the best ways to build a more inclusive, accepting world. It is important, therefore, to clarify the religion of Islam, and to explore the work of various scholars from different backgrounds who have studied the Islamic faith.

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world; it is currently the world's second-largest religion (after Christianity). A study conducted by Pew Research Center indicates that there were 1.8 billion Muslims in the world in 2015, making up about 24% of the global population (Lipka 2017). Middle Eastern countries, of course, have extremely high Muslim

populations, as do North-African regions. However, these areas contain only about 20% of the world's Muslim population. The Asia-Pacific region is home to the majority of the global population of Muslims (62%). Although most Muslims (about 80%) live in Muslim-majority nations, about one-fifth are religious minorities in their home countries, and, further, "Of the roughly 317 million Muslims living as minorities, about 240 million – about three-quarters – live in five countries: India, Ethiopia, China, Russia, and Tanzania"("Mapping the Global Muslim Population"). Currently, Indonesia is the country with the world's largest Muslim population (Lipka 2017).

Muslims and Arabs are placed in a vulnerable situation as minorities in non-Muslim countries such as the U.S. and Canada. A U.S. statistical survey shows that "there were approximately 3.45 million Muslims in the U.S. in 2017, up from about 2.75 in 2011" ("Muslim population in the U.S. 2007-2017"). On the Canadian front, according to Statistics Canada, "In 2011, just over 1 million individuals identified themselves as Muslim on the NHS. They represented 3.2% of the nation's total population, up from 2.0% recorded in the 2001 Census" ("Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada"). The Muslim community in Canada and the U.S. are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and different origins. Despite the diversity of Muslims coming from various cultural and historical backgrounds, all minority Muslim communities experience a wide range of issues associated with Othering. For example, Muslims face discrimination and harassment, and there is pressure towards assimilation. There are common associations between Muslims and terrorists, and labelling of Muslims as outsiders, with practices such as women wearing the *hijab* pointed to as proof that Muslims do not accept or fit in with the North American way of life. There is still extensive misunderstanding of Muslims in Christian countries, especially those in North America.

There are some countries considered secular, and others non-secular. Those that are non-secular promote and enforce the traditional form of *sharia* or Islamic law in education, religious practice, economy, et cetera. Examples of such states include Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Cooperation Council members, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Malaysia and Indonesia (Philpott 2015). Whether part of a secular or non-secular nation, Muslims worldwide share the unifying beliefs that Allah is the one God and Muhammad is the prophet; which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam that Muslims must follow in addition to praying, charity, fasting during the Holy month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca.

Islam has a variety of branches, such as Suni, Shia, and Sufi. Most Sufis are often moderate, while Shia and Suni Muslims can be either fundamentalist or moderate. Khaled Abou El Fadl, one of the most important and influential Islamic thinkers, explores this schism in Islam between moderates and puritans in his book *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremist.* He describes moderates as modernists, progressives, and reformers (16), while puritans (the moniker he prefers) are described as fundamentalists, militants, extremists, radicals, fanatics, jihadist and Islamists (18). He explores how the puritans choose verses from the Quran and interpret them in ways to support their views.

Yet, contrary to puritan interpretation, according to El Fadl, Islam carries the "message of compassion, mercy, love, and beauty and that these values represent the core of the faith" and holds that these are the "qualities which a human being is charged with spreading on this earth" (25). Islam does not distinguish between different ethnicities, nationalities, or socioeconomic standings. In the eyes of God, as El Fadl has derived from the Quran, "there is no distinction between genders, races or classes" (261). Islam champions universal religious freedom, and condemns killing civilians. The Prophet Muhammad once explained that moderation is the

feature of the Islamic faith; therefore, Muslims have to follow the example of being fair-minded, balanced, and moderate to others (109). The vast majority of Muslims are moderates who see Islamic terrorism as a violation of their sacred book.

Because of the social- historical context of the Middle East, especially after the World War II, terrorism is the major source of fear of Islam. Yet terrorism is "an ancient enemy with roots in many cultures, and it has been waged by a wide variety of individuals and groups" as explained by Cynthia C. Combs in her book, *Terrorism in the 21st Century* (2). Terrorism is certainly not unique to any one religion or set of beliefs, and has been a tactic of both those on the left and those on the right (Ibid). The definition of terrorism according to Combs is the "synthesis of war and theatre, a dramatization of the most proscribed kind of violence that which is deliberately perpetrated on civilian non-combatant victims played before an audience in the hope of creating a mood of fear, for political purposes" (5). It is more than unfortunate that the words *terrorism* and *Muslim* have become linked in the minds of many since a cursory examination of history is enough to disprove this knee-jerk association.

To give a significant example, one of the most prominent terrorist organizations in recorded history, founded in 1970, was the Irish Republican Army (IRA). It was identified as a terrorist organization because of its strategies like bombings, kidnappings, extortion and assassinations that it used to fight against the British rule in Ireland. This terrorist group was active for 41 years, from 1970 to 2011. It was responsible for at least 1,977 attacks in 11 countries and for the deaths of at least 1,152 people ("Irish Republican Army"). Yet, following the creation of the IRA, in the era of 1970s and 1980s, the news shifted its focus to terrorism associated with Islam. The American media transformed the traditional "representations of the Arabian sheikh, belly dancers and the desert savage into the image of the religious fanatic"

(Ibrahim 113). Generally, American media have increasingly become "more likely to highlight the radical and sensationalist elements of Islamic activism, thus obscuring the context needed to paint a complete picture" (Ibid).

Currently, the IRA is forgotten or even forgiven. Terrorism seems to associate, in the eyes of many, with acts of violence committed by Muslims against white people. Memories of large-scale white terrorism seem to have virtually vanished, and recent acts of terrorism perpetrated by white attackers are almost ignored and quickly disregarded. It is difficult not to notice that now "the term 'terrorism' is only ever applied to Muslims, but never when it's people of other faiths. Like the KKK, Christian conservatives that bomb abortion clinics, etc" (Al-Khatahtbeh 105). Different Muslim organizations in the U.S and Canada have spoken against terrorism. For example, the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), which is the largest Muslim civil liberties organization in the U.S., "issued more than 100 releases in which we specifically condemn terrorism during the period from 1994-2015" ("CAIR"). CAIR works diligently to condemn terrorism of all kinds, clearly making it an enemy of violent extremists. CAIR has "condemned specific terrorist actions against Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Americans, Spaniards, Turks, Israelis, Saudis, Russians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Iraqis, British, and so on" ("CAIR"). Similarly, the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) condemns terrorist attacks as well. Most recently, MAC condemned the attack in Edmonton in 2017, stating that, "Today's attack is born of an extremist ideology of hate and violence that we all reject and does not represent the true understanding of Islam" ("MAC"). Thus, the moderate Muslims have to speak loudly to clarify to the world and to their own people that Islam is a religion of peace. The moderates should not let the extremists control the message, and that is true both in Islam and Christianity. We can see an example of the difference of how terrorist attacks perpetrated by

Muslims are treated differently from those perpetrated by non-Muslims by examining the media treatment of the recent Las Vegas and Orlando mass shooting.

In June of 2016, Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded at least 53 others in a terrorist attack at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Although "there has been no claim of responsibility for the attack on jihadi forums," the fact remains that "ISIS sympathizers have reacted by praising the attack on pro-Islamic State forums" (Ellis et al. 2016). In addition, the shooter pledged ISIS allegiance. The incident "was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history and the nation's worst terror attack since 9/11, authorities said" (Ibid). Mateen, an American born U.S. citizen who lived in Fort Pierce, revealed that his parents were immigrants from Afghanistan.

Similarly, on October 2017 in Las Vegas, white gunman Stephen Paddock "rained bullets down into a crowd at a country music festival Sunday [across the street from the Mandalay Bay resort], killing at least 59 people and injuring hundreds more in the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history" (Bui et al. 2017). He had no apparent religious or political affiliations. He, therefore, would not be labeled as a "terrorist," which may be correct because there were no political aims, and would be perfectly reasonable if all attacks were treated equally. White extremist attacks do not always earn the label of "terror," regardless of the number of casualties or brutality of attacks, while the same certainly cannot be said for Islamic attacks. It is easy to imagine that if this same attacker was Islamic, it would immediately be labeled as terrorism by the media and by the public at large.

When we compare U.S. President Donald Trump's responses to both incidents, we can observe a striking difference. He describes the Orlando shooting as, "the worst terror strike on our soil since September 11th, and the worst mass shooting in our country's history" (Beckwith

2016). As it appears that Mateen's parents are Afghans who immigrated to the United States, President Trump states that, "The bottom line is that the only reason the killer was in America in the first place, was because we allowed his family to come here" (Ibid). He continues, "We have a dysfunctional immigration system, which does not permit us to know who we let into our country, and it does not permit us to protect our citizens properly. We have an incompetent administration" (Ibid). In stark contrast, Trump's speech regarding the Las Vegas shooting was quite different. The Las Vegas shooting, which was the worst in U.S. history was referred to by Trump on Twitter as simply a "terrible shooting". In his speech to the nation, he labelled it as "an act of pure evil," but not as an act of terror (STAFF 2017). Trump has seemingly reserved the term "terrorism" for those attacks perpetrated by those who identify as Muslim, and in these cases, he is very quick to attach this label. We can find similar examples in his responses to the July 2016 attack in Nice and to the attack against concertgoers in Manchester on May 2016 (Merelli 2017). These attacks were used as convenient fodder for Trump's notion that travel bans must be enforced against those travelling from Muslim countries (Ibid). According to a study by New America, "between 2001 and 2015, more Americans were killed by homegrown right-wing extremists than by Islamist terrorists" (Williams 2017). And yet anti-Muslim sentiments continue, and Islamic terrorism is seen as the most extreme threat that the Western world faces. Such a reaction is not just the result of President Trump's right wing politics; it is symptomatic of an ideological double standard of U.S. populism, and Trump just manipulates it to fit his political agenda.

The stereotype of the terrorist as Muslim is a puzzling one. There are many different extremist views throughout the world, and acts of horrifying violence are committed in the name of many different causes. Differences in religion, conflicting views on political stances, and

hatred and intolerance in general have been the cause of innumerable attacks. But shedding blood in the name of a "righteous" cause, of course, is not something that only Muslims, or Arabs, or immigrants (the "other") do. This is, rather, something that people of all backgrounds and cultures do. In other words, it is shorthand to identify "the other" as a terrorist. Such "othering" is a dangerous practice that is quite widespread. In most of North America, people who belong to a different race or have a different ethnicity other than white have been categorized as the "other." Although many would agree that rejecting a person because of skin color, belief or nationality is "racism," many of those same people still carry around a perception of the "other" which differentiates visible minorities from "normal" folks. Otherness is racially marked and defined, based on characteristics of racial classification systems, and prejudices are carried around unseen and unnoticed (by the perpetrators) at an unconscious level. At the heart of racial identification lies the claims we wish to make about "them" and about how different they are from "us" (Al-Khatahtbeh 89).

The practice of stereotyping, for example, causes us to identify a group of people as terrorists, and fosters racial profiling among different races. Those who commit racial stereotyping have unjustly created situations that now affect people of diverse phenotypes. The U.S media has clearly shown the difference on numerous occasions, most recently in the contrasting examples of the Las Vegas "mental illness" situation and the Orlando "terrorism" situation.

Despite such lack of attention to white attacks versus Islamic attacks, according to Cohen, who has studied mass casualty attacks in the United States and Europe, "there is no religious, ethnic or socioeconomic profile-even among those motivated by extremist ideologies such as those of terrorist groups like ISIS" (Keneally 2017). The media exacerbates the problem

by pushing for greater inspection and profiling of Muslims. Before the U.S. media declare if a violent attack is a terrorist act or not, they determine the race and religion of the murderer instead of focusing on the criminal himself. Non-white attackers are often identified as terrorists, and countries of origin are usually mentioned immediately, reifying the notion of the dangerous Other. Although an act of terror does not belong to any faith, we have seen over and over again that terrorism is only perceived when Muslims are involved.

This misrepresentation by the U.S. media is invidious, because it harms innocent Muslims by creating or exacerbating xenophobia and empowers violence abroad by labeling all Muslims or Arabs as "terrorists." Many of Muslim faith (and many non-Muslims!) in the West sympathize with Al-Khatahtbeh, who explains that, "It is exhausting to have to denounce violent actions on behalf of your entire religion" (109). If this situation is not devastating enough, it is aggravated by the ironic fact that Muslims themselves have increasingly become the victims of highly-targeted terrorist attack, such as the Québec City mosque attack against Muslims.

Another unsettling fact is that some terrorist attacks garner more news coverage than the others. A U.S study conducted by Kearns et al. found that "when the perpetrator(s) of a terrorist attack are members of an out-group or 'other,' [such as when the perpetrator is Muslim] we should expect to see more media coverage" (5). They report that, "the average attack with a Muslim perpetrator is covered in 90.8 articles. Attacks with a Muslim, foreign-born perpetrator are covered in 192.8 articles on average. Compare this with other attacks, which received an average of 18.1 articles" (Ibid). It is disturbing to see that when a terrorist is not Muslim, their religion is often deemed irrelevant. It is in these situations that only the individuals themselves are held accountable, and not an entire race or religion (Al-Khatahtbeh 105). This news coverage is truly white privilege at its finest. Ultimately, the way in which the U.S. media presents such a

prejudiced picture of "reality" heavily affects public perception. Journalistic intent may be rooted in racism or in what the media thinks will garner more public attention, but regardless of motivation, what is presented in the media when it comes to terrorism quite literally tells viewers who and what should be feared.

The inaccurate perception that most terrorists are Muslims has directly link to the fact that the U.S. media features far more coverage of such incidents. A study conducted by The Center for Investigative Reporting from 2008 to 2016, found out only "63 cases of Islamist domestic terrorism. The vast majority of these (76 percent) were foiled plots, meaning no attack took place" (Neiwert 2017). However, in the same period "we found that right-wing extremists were behind nearly twice as many incidents: 115. Just over a third of these incidents (35 percent) were foiled plots" (Ibid). It is hard to blame Westerners, based on this finding, that they have so much (unwarranted) fear of radical Islamic terrorism. Ensuring that attacks are covered in a much more measured way would help combat this fear. What we require is a variety of viewpoints in news, "but particularly in international reporting when journalists are telling stories about a culture or faith their audiences – and themselves – know little about" (Ibrahim 123). These different viewpoints in news are important because they will help to give a full and fair picture of Arabs/Muslims in relation to other races/religions for the viewers.

Over time, the media has established a clear binary of "us" versus "them" through the false depictions of terrorism presented in different television programs. According to U.S. Homeland Security, "there is no 'us versus them' … Muslims are not 'outsiders' looking in, but are an integral part of America and the West," ("Homeland Security" 2008) and therefore depictions contrary to this view in some media does not reflect the position of America's own Homeland Security.

In this context, I think it is important to explore some basics concerning the complexity of Islam. The exploration is important to this thesis for a number of reasons. Personally, it is a matter of understanding myself; simply because I am a Muslim woman does not naturally make me an expert of every aspect of my own religion. I myself cannot "represent" Islam. If so, how can I make critical judgement on the representation of Islam on television? Theoretically, therefore, a Žižekian critique of public fantasy on television requires the context of the subject. Analytically, I need to form an overview to provide a checkpoint for critical analysis.

Let us begin with a keyword: *Salam*. *Salam* in Arabic means peace, tranquility, repose or serenity and it is the same term from which the word Islam is derived (El Fadl 209). The word Islam means the submission or the surrender to the Will of God ("Islam Means 'Peace'"). The Quran also says, "It is empathetic in naming that religion 'Islam', holding that God Himself has so named it" (Smith 82). As well, it states, "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam" (3:19). Considering that Islam is the second-largest religion worldwide, it is important to understand and appreciate the faith, specifically when it comes to the concept of women's equality, as there are many misconceptions about the role of women according to Islam.

According to those who have risen to the defense of the Islamic faith, "Islam liberated women, created a democracy, endorsed pluralism, and protected human rights, long before these institutions ever existed in the West" (El Fadl 78). Well before the West had any interest taking steps towards the equality of women, Islam lifted women out of a life of oppression into one of liberation and equality. Although women were considered to be nothing more than possessions elsewhere, Islam gave women dignity (Stacey 2008). We can see the concept of women as possessions in something called "coverture," inherited from English common law. Under the doctrine of coverture, a woman was legally considered to be her husband's possession.

Patriarchal tradition throughout the West, which extends into the present, means that men freely continue to practice their privilege and dominate (as well as exclude) women. Women have been marginalized in many different cultures due to pervasive patriarchal cultural practices; religions were often used as a tool for reinforcing patriarchal ideologies and practices – but that is not unique to Islam.

Different factors influenced and determined patriarchal tradition such as social, economic, and political forces. Moreover, it should be noted that patriarchy is "not the exclusive preserve of Muslim societies but rather the anthropological evidence shows that this has been the predominant social form for millennia throughout the Mediterranean area" (Muñoz 1993). However, there is much confusion between an erroneous conflation of patriarchal traditions in the context of religious practice. According to Fatima Mernissi, a Moroccan feminist and sociologist, "even within Islamic countries, there does exist an attitude of male superiority and female subjection that contributes to a generalist misunderstanding of Muslims" (Ebbitt 2015). Mernissi said that "Islam isn't patriarchal, but patriarchy has been heavily involved in the history of the Middle East, and have subsequently seeped into the ways Muslims practice their faith" (Ibid). Thus, many Muslim women face gender inequalities, which are associated with the patriarchal system. The diversity of Muslim attitudes towards patriarchy can be seen in the fact that there are those Islamic countries that practice patriarchy and are considered to be puritans and others that are considered to be more moderate in terms of religious practices and laws. One example is the comparison between an Islamic puritanism city such as Timbuktu, and a moderate thinking one such as the country of Tunisia, which I will discuss further.

Women in Muslim West African cities such as Timbuktu have been persecuted, such as when the city was occupied by Islamist militants. Even though the women were not at all

receptive to the militants and were far more progressive, the *Jihadis* imposed their version of *Sharia* law there, with catastrophic consequences for the women of the north. For example, the *Jihadi* ban music, and all women were forced to cover all except their faces. Stories of women being beaten or jailed for dressing incorrectly are part of the city's history. According to Mint Mohammed, "They had applied their law, and if you did not obey their law there were sanctions, so when the women refused to wear the *burqa*, they sanctioned them" (English 2014). She continues, "It was a violation of human rights, and it was the women who suffered the most, because in Timbuktu the women go out a lot. They go to the market, they earn money, they run small businesses, they almost run a branch of the economy. And they are already covered, but *burqas* are not part of our culture. All the women who didn't wear them got into difficulty. It was truly a humiliation" (English 2014). The legal restrictions were coupled with strongly embedded societal and cultural norms that were imposed on women. When a country upholds a religion as the foundation of its existence, laws are justified in religious terms. Interpretation of sacred texts often informs lawmaking. But interpretations are interwoven with historical and cultural practices: for some, the interpretation of a religion and its sacred texts is a way to limit and suppress people's rights; and for others, it is a road to freedom. The treatments of women among Muslim countries are diverse and the road to women's liberation is ongoing. Muslim stereotypes in some Western media reflect only the conservative/fundamentalist interpretations and practices.

Puritans view women differently than moderates. Puritans promote an aggressive form of patriarchal power over women in the name of Islam, which includes the belief that education is unnecessary for women, or that women ought not to work outside their homes or take positions of leadership. This, of course, excludes women from public life. What puritans claim is that

"their vision of Islam liberated and honoured women by protecting them from the evil gazes of lustful men and from being exposed to humiliation or molestation while in the public arena" (El Fadl 260). This puritan interpretation is not universal. Muslim women can have the privilege to participate in workplace.

In terms of women's liberation and work, Homa Hoodfar discusses the stereotypes associated with traditional Muslim women, specifically in Egypt, in her book *Between Marriage and the Market: Intimate Politics and Survival in Cairo*. According to Hoodfar, "Women's participation in the labor market continues to be considered one of the most important measures of 'emancipation'" (103). Hoodfar argues that any practices, ideological or cultural, which prevent women from participating in the labour market, are harmful to women (103). In her research, she investigated many women who "engaged for long hours in activities that sometimes brought in more cash than those of the working males" (110). The problem with the predominant ideologies that prevent full participation of women is that, "In the popular cultural setting, men and women are believed to have different natures that make them suited to different but complementary tasks. Women belong to the home because their caring nature makes them suited to looking after children and the husband, while men must provide for the family. Islamic ideology and the Quran are heavily used as justification for such beliefs" (132). Based on these widespread cultural beliefs, husbands provided reliable financial support, which often precluded the tendency of women to question the ideology. Interestingly many women also reinforced the rigid gender division of labour and referred to Islamic rule and customs to justify their beliefs. Men who strayed from the established gender divisions of labour were even ridiculed. The women who had even more of a disadvantage in the labour market, such as those from lower income groups, had greater reason to want to dismantle the traditional ideology (132). Muslim

women in the past half-century have dramatically different viewpoints. Even among traditionalists, there are those who uphold patriarchal ideology as a way of maintaining a family unit and support for themselves, and those who oppose the traditional ideology and reject patriarchy as women become more independent in the workplace and more in control of their lives.

Moderate Muslims are aware of new social orders and changes. Islam ascribes Muslim women the right to work and earn money, to become physicians, nurses, or teachers. Neither the Quran nor the *Sunnah* (the teachings and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) deprives this right of women. Unfortunately, many outside the religion consider certain cultural practices to be a justification of how they interpret the religion itself. What we need is a differentiation between varied cultural practices and Islam itself. Indeed, many cultural traditions surrounding women do not belong to the religion of Islam. When we look to the time of Prophet Muhammad, women were very active in both the social and political life of the community. Islam gave women roles such as "leaders, scholars, and even military advisers" in this time (Strasser 2015). It is indeed impressive that in Islamic cultures, "women owned property independently and had a voice and vote in political affairs centuries before the spread of women's rights in the West" (Ibid). These expansive roles for women in Islam are in stark contrast to how many Westerners perceive the Islamic religion.

In *Where to Invade Next*, American filmmaker Michael Moore visits various countries to discover policies of education, health care, equality, etc. that could solve social problems plaguing the United States. One such country was Tunisia, a North African Muslim country, where the women of the country protested the exclusion of women's rights in the constitution. Before long, the women's demands were met. While Moore may over-Romanticize the story

because his agenda is to challenge the American ego, certain historical and political facts are trustworthy. For example, Moore quotes the constitution itself: “2014 Tunisian Constitution, Women’s Rights: The state commits to protect women’s achieved rights and works to strengthen and develop those rights” (Moore 2015). So although there is often a conflict between patriarchal society and women’s rights, this same conflict does not have to exist between Islam and women’s rights. On the constitution, the head of Tunisia’s conservative Islamic Party’s responded, “We made this moral choice, because power isn’t everything. Prayers come before power. So does avoiding conflict and bloodshed” (Moore 2015). When his belief contradicts the will of the public, he maintained that his first priority was to seek peace, and he let go of his power and his view of the Islamic state. Consequently, we have to be careful to differentiate Islam from the Muslim nation. It is important to remember that Islam is a set of beliefs, goals, values and ideals, while Muslims in any nation struggle, as all religions do, to implement those ideals (Strasser 2015). Ultimately, people should not confuse various Muslim cultures, as experienced in many Middle Eastern countries, with Islam itself.

It is unfortunate that “the Islamic faith has long been misunderstood, misrepresented, and viewed with suspicion in the United States and throughout much of the Western world” (Peek 5). Although some extremist Muslims have committed intolerant, terrifying and violent acts, the majority of Muslims believe that this is not rooted in Islam. It is clear that not all Muslims should be blamed for such acts. Every person is responsible for his or her own behaviours and actions, and every individual represents his or her own faith, and not the entirety of religion. In addition, according to El Fadl, the “Quran instructs Muslims to civilize the earth and avoid corrupting it by shedding blood and spreading strife and fear” (175). The Quran teaches the value of innocent life in these words: “if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread

mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind" (5:32). Bilal Philips maintains, "Judging Islam on the basis of a few Muslims is like eating a rotten fruit and blaming the whole tree."

Thus, harassments, hate crimes, and physical assaults against Muslims are not only attacks on those individuals; it hurts Islam itself or all humanity. The religion of Islam is not to blame for the actions of a misguided few (Al-Khatahtbeh 47). For example, fundamentalist Christian conservative ideology does not represent the whole of Christianity and the countries that have a Christian majority. Unfortunately, misunderstanding leads to fear and hatred. According to Statistics Canada, "following a notable increase in hate crimes against the Muslim population in 2015, police reported 20 fewer in 2016 for a total of 139". The decrease was thanks to a reduction in hate crimes against Muslims in Alberta, Ontario and Québec ("Police-Reported hate crime" 2017). In contrast, the FBI hate crime statistics for 2016 reveal a rise over the year of hate crimes in the U.S. especially incidents targeting Muslims: "Of the 6,121 hate crimes reported to the FBI in 2016, anti-Islamic (anti-Muslim) crimes accounted for 307. This was a more than 19% rise from the previous year" (Willingham 2017). Sweeping generalizations and a distinct lack of understanding of Islamic history among non-Muslims is a pivotal part of this problem. El Fadl indicates that the "the solution could be to teach others about your faith" (11).

Some media outlets seek out Muslims' attitudes towards discrimination and Islamophobia. In an example of a story that focuses on a positive picture of Muslims/Arabs, a Muslim father forgives a man who was involved in his son's murder. According to the father, Jitmoud, "Islam teaches that God will not be able to forgive someone until the person who was wronged forgives that person" (Seraaj et al. 2017). The incident occurred in April of 2015, when "Salahuddin Jitmoud was making one of his last deliveries for the night as a Pizza Hut delivery

driver when he was stabbed to death and robbed at an apartment complex in Lexington, Kentucky" (Ibid). On November 7, 2017, during the sentencing hearing, Jitmoud, the Muslim American told Relford (the man who was sentenced to prison), "The door of opportunity for God to forgive him is open. … So, reach out to Him. You have a new chapter of good life coming" (Ibid). Many Muslims are trying to recreate in their lives the behaviour of Prophet Muhammad, meeting hostility with peace, tolerance, and compassion. This example shows how Muslims respond and tackle racism and Islamophobia, an example of which the media should present more often to their viewers. Furthermore, freely given education by Muslims and a willingness to be open-minded on the part of Westerners is the real hope to strengthening the relations between the East and West.

Yale Christian theologian Miroslav Volf, in his book *Exclusion and Embrace,* explores the pursuit of justice in a world which is pluralistic and full of resultant hostility, positing that, "Agreement on justice depends on the will to embrace the other and that justice itself will be unjust as long as it does not become a mutual embrace" (197). The premise is that all people stand within a particular tradition, even if this tradition is practiced in more than one place, and that a person's identity is strongly shaped by their social location. Thus, not only are Christians molded by the beliefs and the biblical traditions, but they are also affected by the surrounding larger culture in which they are situated. Existing in "overlapping and rapidly changing social spaces" means one must make sense of and manifest "basic Christian commitments in culturally situated ways" (210). Volf asserts that these commitments can only be reconciled with social realities, specifically on justice-related issues, if we develop an "enlarged thinking" or a "double vision". In practice, this means allowing the voices and perspectives of others, especially those with whom we may be in conflict, resonate within ourselves, and allowing them to help us see

them, as well as ourselves, from their perspective, and if needed, readjust our perspective as we take into account their perspectives (213). Volf further adds, "If our identities are shaped in interaction with others, and if we are called ultimately to belong together, then we need to shift the concept of justice away from an exclusive stress on making detached judgments and toward sustaining relationships, away from blind impartiality and toward sensibility for difference… true justice will always be on the way to embrace" (225). True justice can be achieved in the previous example of Jitmoud, who embraces that which is "Other." He precipitates a different kind of thinking for those in the West who have had incorrect assumptions about Islam, and sheds light on a different perspective about Muslims, promoting tolerance, forgiveness, and the embracing of difference. His embracing of his "enemy" is an example of an enlarged thinking that we should adopt as we move towards unification and acceptance.

All representations are misrepresentation in the sense that all writers, whether Muslim or not, cannot generalize a representation that is absolutely true. Each scholar has his or her own unique knowledge and experience. However, this is not to say that all representations are equal. Academically, many different scholars from various backgrounds have written about Islam, including Catholics, Baptists and Muslims, and many different thinkers have added to the discussion as well, including Marxist scholars. Through some of these writings, I explore the history and diversity of Islam from different perspectives. Islam, like other world religions, varies in its practices, rituals and interpretations. It is just as important to realize that, in the same way, "all religious systems have suffered at one time or another from absolutist extremism, and Islam is not an exception" (El Fadl 101). Therefore, the unequal treatments and/or perceptions of Muslims by outsiders of the religion is certainly unwarranted.

A Christian scholar, Philip Jenkins, in his book titled *Laying Down the Sword: Why We Can't Ignore the Bible's Violent Verses*, compares the Bible and the Quran. He observes that the Bible is just as violent as the Quran. According to Jenkins, "In the minds of ordinary Christians and Jews, the Quran teaches warfare, while the Bible offers a message of love, forgiveness, and charity" (5). Yet he argues, "In fact, the Bible has its own bloody and violent passages, which have troubled faithful readers for centuries, and have attracted still more intense attention during recent debates over the relationship between religion and violence" (6). How anyone who is part of a given faith (or outside of it) views the sacred text(s) of that religion all depends on how the verses are individually interpreted and understood. The generalizations made regarding Islam as a violent religion could also happen to Christianity, if we put the religions under equal scrutiny. Generalizations about the Holy Scriptures would not be helpful; reading and interpretation in the proper social context is necessary for understanding.

Another book, entitled *The Evolution of God* written by Robert Wright, from a Baptist background, analyzes the three Abrahamic religions and the crucial moments in history that led the monotheistic faiths to thrive during hard times. Wright combines anthropological, psychological, and archaeological research, and argues that religion mainly develops in response to economic and political circumstances; in his words, "religion and politics were flip sides of the same coin" (352). Wright argues that Judaism, Christianity and Islam appear to have a moral direction toward the good that changes with the times and circumstances, and the Prophet Muhammad "embodies the moral history of the Abrahamic faith with all its twists and turns" (396). According to Wright,

> No serious scholar believes that the Koran is wholly reliable as a guide to what Muhammad actually said. Indeed, ancient sources outside the Islamic tradition raise the

> possibility that on one key theme—Muhammad's attitude toward Jews during the final years of his life—the Koran may have been amended, or at least creatively interpreted, after his death (332).

Muslims believe that the Quran has never been changed; however, the interpretation of different verses could vary according to different theologians. But at the end of his book, Wright argues that, "All of the Abrahamic scriptures attest to the correlation between circumstances and moral consciousness, but none so richly as the Koran. In that sense, at least, the Koran is unrivaled as a revelation" (405).

One interesting focal point for Wright is how fundamentalist Muslims have seized upon some verses in the Quran to justify the use of violence (and this part helps me realize the issue of interpretation and lawmaking that I have explained earlier). Wright understands how interpretation affects the meaning of a text: "sometimes a single Koranic verse is confidently ascribed by several different Muslim thinkers to several different sets of circumstances" (370). It is sometimes important to understand the reasoning of the Quranic verse, examining the historical context of the verse will simplify the interpretations.

One important topic, especially for analyzing *Homeland*, is the concept of *jihad*. There are various interpretations of the core Islamic principal *jihad* (the misunderstood concept that some radicals rely on), which Wright explains. He illustrates that *jihad* means "striving" or "struggle" and could apply to the struggle of the soul to do right (376). Fisher defines *Jihad* as "The Muslim's struggle against the inner forces that prevent God-realization and the outer barriers to establishment of the order" (438). *Jihad* therefore is a spiritual struggle against the self/desire that called *Jihad al nafs*. There are different forms of *Jihad*, it can be "cleansing oneself from vanity and pettiness, pursuing knowledge, curing the ill, feeding the poor, and

standing up for truth and justice" (El Fadl 221). The Quran has explained the *Jihad* different times to "refer to the act of striving to serve the purposes of God" (Ibid). For example, "And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself. Indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds"(29:6). Many Western media associate *Jihad* with holy war, "propagated in the name of God against unbelievers" (El Fadl 220). However, the Quran does not mention the word *Jihad* to refer to warfare or fighting, it instead referred to as *qita*l (223). While *Jihad* is unrestricted, good and for the self, *qital* is not. *Qital* or war "is restricted and limited by particular condition…on every single occasion that the Qur'an exhorts Muslims to fight, it hastens to qualify the exhortation by a command to believers to not transgress, to forgive or to seek peace" (223).

Extremists misapply their literal interpretation of the Quran to support violence, while those who blame the religion show similarly little awareness of the complexity of scriptural interpretation. The unfortunate fact, pointed out by Wright, is that, "You may not encounter many Muslims in real life, but you see them on TV. So your feelings toward Muslims in general depend largely on which Muslims wind up on TV" (416). Wright then discusses terrorists, which make up a very small percentage of Muslims, and Osama bin Laden, whose interests are sharply opposed to those of the average American.

Wright argues that the key to reducing the impact of such factions and minimizing the influence of extremists is not to ostracize Muslims, but instead to show respect towards Muslims and the Islamic faith (Wright 415). Despite the diversity of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in terms of their law and theology, they all share a common belief in the oneness of God, sacred history, prophets, ethics and morality. If believers could concentrate more on the similarities rather than the differences between faiths, a place of mutual respect and understanding could be reached more easily.

Karen Armstrong, a world religions scholar with a Catholic background, in her book, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* focuses on the Abrahamic faith, giving historical facts, which makes her work quite distinguishable from El Fadl. She traces Christianity, Judaism, and Islam from Abraham to the modern age and shows their interconnectedness and coexistence over several centuries. Armstrong describes the development of the idea of a personal God in all three religious traditions. She expands on important facts about the prophet Muhammad and how the Jews helped the prophet Muhammad to develop his own knowledge of scripture, and the chronology of the prophets, Abraham, Moses and Jesus and the history of Ishmael (154). The prophet Muhammad did not ask Jews or Christians to convert to Islam, "because they had received authentic revelations of their own" (151) and the Quran is built upon the revelations of Torah, Psalms, and Gospel: "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him" (Quran 29:46).

Armstrong, indeed, seems sympathetic toward Islam, which she defends with more fervor than other religions. She argues, "The intolerance that many people condemn in Islam today does not always spring from a rival vision of God but from quite another source" (152). She insists, "Muslims are intolerant of injustice, whether this is committed by rulers of their own… or by the powerful Western countries" (Ibid). Overall, she explores the history of Islamic faith from the pre-Islamic period '*Jahiliyyah'* to the rise of different orientations of Islam. Such orientations include Sufis, Sunni, Shia, philosophers and mystics, all of whom represent different interpretations of the major faith.

Furthermore, Armstrong focuses on the history of Islam in another book called *Islam: A Short History*, which takes the reader from the time of the prophet Muhammad to the present.

Although she is not Muslim, she expresses the moderate perspective of Islam. By highlighting important events, she shows that Islam has never encouraged anyone to kill other people, even non-Muslims. She clarifies the misconception about Islam, such as the meaning of *jihad*. She analyzes the term "fundamentalism" and says that, "the Western media often give the impression that the embattled and occasionally violent form of religiosity known as fundamentalism is a purely Islamic phenomenon" (164). Ironically, fundamentalist movements in different faiths such as Christianity, Judaism or Hinduism all share certain characteristics (165): fear, intolerance of the realities of the modern world, including science and liberation of people of all genders and sexual orientations. "Purified" versions of the faiths emerge in fundamentalist groups—versions that are often oversimplified, distorted, and out of context.

Armstrong argues that the Islamic world has seen a particularly virulent form of fundamentalism arise, which is equally due to both a seemingly-threatening Western secular culture and oppressive Middle Eastern dictatorships. She points out that the Islamic faith conflates the concepts of both God and history and God and politics more so than any other world religion. This recipe, unfortunately, is a formula for fanaticism, but it is certainly not unique to the Islamic religion. All religions spawn followers with extremist views, which must be overcome, and Armstrong's history illustrates that Islam is capable of doing so. It is also important to remember that fundamentalism is not even necessarily religious in nature. The West can be guilty of its own oppressive capitalist fundamentalism, among other forms.

We must examine fundamentalism of all kinds as opposed to targeting only one belief system. In *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism,* the Episcopal bishop of Newark writes:

> A major function of fundamentalist religion is to bolster deeply insecure and fearful people. This is done by justifying a way of life with all of its defining prejudiece. It thereby provides an appropriate and legitimate outlet for one's anger. The authority of an inerrant Bible that can be readily quoted to buttress this point of view becomes an essential ingredient to such a life. (Spong 5)

Other than anger and fear, the term fundamentalist can also applied to the capitalist spectrum. El Saadawi writes that capitalism and fundamentalism are interdependent. She says, "The global capitalist religious system flourished through colonialism and imperialism, invading other countries with military force and the Will of God" (El Saadawi 2017). America's influence in the world is an example. The fundamentalist oversimplifies issues in binary logic. The military intervention of the Middle East such as the U.S invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan is an example that was justified in the name of freedom, shared values and democracy. The war resulted in fundamentalist Islamic organizations funded and supported by the U.S such as Daesh (the Islamic State).

From a Canadian Muslim perspective, Jasmin Zine, in her edited book *Islam in the Hinterlands: Muslim Cultural Politics in Canada*, provides an analysis of many Muslim Canadian issues. Her piece examines the Muslim role in Canadian media, education, politics, and national security. The first section, entitled "Gender and Cultural Politics," delves into issues of gender and race with reference to a number of recent events involving Muslims in Canadian news and politics. Zine identifies three frameworks: "disciplining culture," in which Muslim cultures are defined as dangerous and in need of containment within Canada's accepted multicultural framework; "death by culture," in which Muslim women are portrayed as threatened by the beliefs and practices of their communities; and "death of culture," in which

Muslims in general are seen as a danger to Canadian society. She explains, however, "The Muslim community in Canada is far from homogeneous demographically and ideologically despite the essentialized representations and narrow conceptions that commonly shape perceptions of who Muslims are, what they believe, and how they behave" (6). Therefore, any attempt to understand Muslim culture, people and religion through a single narrow framework will always prove to be insufficient.

In the next chapter, I focus on the Žižekian framework outlined in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, which I use to explore the concept of the "Other." Žižek examines the ideological fantasies that shape human society. In consideration of these perspectives, it becomes clear that popular culture productions (entertainment pieces) such as *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* are based on people's fantasies and are shaped by society's biases. These biases, in turn, shape people's conceptions. I look at numerous examples of such fantasies and biases manifested in both series.

Chapter 3

Žižek's Notion of Ideological Fantasy

Many of Slavoj Žižek's works employ Lacanian psychoanalysis and Marxist dialectics to address concepts and issues in politics through reading popular culture as an ideological indicator. He is considered to be one of the most prominent philosophers for theorizing how fantasy relates to the formation of ideology, and he has contributed significantly to both psychoanalytic and film theories. Utilizing a Žižekian framework is an effective method for revealing cultural materials as a fantasy structure, which is both a product, and an agent of ideology. Such a framework can create a more complex analysis than a simple critique of "correctness" in representations.

Žižek's foundational work *The Sublime Object of Ideology* is well known as a powerful contribution to the psychoanalytical theory of ideology. In *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Žižek argues that ideology is more than simply the fantasy that people come to believe about themselves and the society in which they exist. The classical Marxist concept of ideology paints it as a "false consciousness," and if only people were informed about how the world actually works, they would therefore be in a position to (and would) change it.

As explained by Žižek, Lacan argued that it was Karl Marx who incepted the concept of the symptom that is "not discovered, excavated from the hidden depth of the past, but constructed retroactively" (58). We can question, along with Žižek, whether this Lacanian thesis is just an analogy, or whether it is actually worth considering more deeply as a theoretical foundation. In deciding if Marx truly described the concept of the symptom as it is used in the Freudian field, it is appropriate to consider the Kantian question, as pointed out by Žižek, "concerning the epistemological 'conditions of possibility': how was it possible for Marx, in his analysis of the world of commodities, to produce a concept which applies also to the analysis of

dreams, hysterical phenomena, and so on?" (3). It is important to recognize the key similarity between the ways in which Marx and Freud approach and carry out interpretations of commodities and of dreams. For both theorists, the aim is to avoid the overly "fetishistic fascination" with the 'content' which is "supposedly hidden behind the form; the 'secret' to be unveiled through analysis is not the content hidden by the form" (of commodities or of dreams), "but, on the contrary, the secret of the form itself" (Ibid). The theoretical approach to "the form of dreams does not consist in penetrating from the manifest content to its 'hidden kernel,' to the latent dream-thoughts". It rather "consists in the answer to the question: why have the latent dream-thoughts assumed such a form, why were they transposed into the form of a dream?"(Ibid). This approach is the case as well when considering commodities. The vital task "is not to penetrate to the hidden kernel of the commodity". It is not essential that we examine how its value has been determined based on the amount of work that went into its production. The real task is to "explain why work assumed the form of the value of a commodity," and "why it can affirm its social character only in the commodity-form of its product" (4). As Freud repeatedly emphasizes, according to Žižek,

> There is nothing "unconscious" in the 'latent dream- thought': this thought is an entirely 'normal' thought which can be articulated in the syntax of everyday, common language; topologically, it belongs to the system of, 'consciousness/preconsciousness'; the subject is usually aware of it, even excessively so; it harasses him all the time... Under certain conditions this thought is pushed away, forced out of the consciousness, drawn into the unconscious - that is, submitted to the laws of the 'primary process', translated into the language of the unconscious (Ibid).

Thus, the relationship between what is often referred to as the "latent thought," the dream's

“manifest content,” or the literal text of the dream, is a relationship between what is indeed a ”normal”, (pre)conscious thought and “its translation into the 'rebus' of the dream” (5). Therefore, dreams do not contain undistorted “latent thought,” but rather, the core essence of dreams is the actual work that is done: by the mechanisms of displacement and condensation, the figuration of the contents of words or syllables, dreams express thoughts that are not latent at all.

To apply it to our culture is problematic if we consider a television show as a public dream of the culture that produces it. Analyzing how Muslims are depicted on television does not only speak for the diversity of Muslims, but it also engages the political unconscious of the dominant Western culture. Žižek's Marxist-Lacanian theory implies that the core essence of the show does not represent the mainstream beliefs and thoughts of the culture. Rather, it is the actual work being done. The mechanism of displacement and condensation is a distortion of the latent thought, and the analysis should focus on the mechanism of distortion as revealed by the manifest content. The show does not simply represent or misrepresent its subjects, and the show does not represent or misrepresent its viewers. It distorts both because the production has to imagine both its characters as well as the perception of the viewers. This realization complicates the basic assumptions of the Marxist theory of ideology.

According to Žižek “the fundamental level of ideology… is that of (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality” (33). This theory proves interesting since most people do not consider fantasy to be that which shapes/creates reality, and rather, fantasy is often considered to be the opposite of reality. Žižek argues that “Reality” is a fantasy construction that enables us to mask the Real of our desire. It is parallel to ideology in that, “ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our ‘reality’ itself” (45). It is also the case that people may indeed

recognize that what they have established as their "reality" is not the *actual* reality, but is rather built upon an ideological illusion (dubbed by Žižek as "ideological fantasy") which is nevertheless followed as if it were genuine. Žižek points to the related cynicism (inherent in such a paradoxical structure) as one of the aspects which keeps us blind to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: "even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, we are still doing them" (30). Through Marx's example of the Master-Servant relationship of feudalism, Žižek explains further,

> The illusion [of mystified relations and superstitions] is not on the side of knowledge; it is rather already on the side of reality itself, of what people are doing. What they do not know is that their social reality itself, their activity, is guided by an illusion, by fetishistic inversion. What they overlook, what they misrecognize, is not the reality but the illusion which is structuring their reality, their real social activity. They know very well how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they did not know. This illusion is therefore double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structuring our real, effective relationship to reality. And this overlooked, unconscious illusion is what may be called the ideological fantasy (Žižek 29, 30).

In order to explain the meaning behind the statement that ideological fantasy structures reality itself, we can start with the fundamental Lacanian theory that in the opposition between dream and reality, fantasy is on the side of reality; Lacan argues that it is fantasy that gives consistency to what we call "reality" (Žižek 44). This view is formulated by Lacan as $<>*a*. In this algorithm, the "$" represents the barred subject; the middle portion, "<>," is derived from the mathematical "less than" or "greater than" symbols; and finally the "a" is the object *a*, or the object cause of desire. In *The Plague of Fantasy*, Žižek translates it as "an 'impossible'

relationship between the *empty, non-phenomenal subject* and the *phenomena which forever remain 'desubjectivized', inaccessible to the subject*" (Žižek 160). In other words, a gap between physical reality and our consciousness makes the two incompatible. The realization of this gap reveals the emptiness of the self and the impossibility for the self to reach the truth. Social reality is then a construct that we develop to hide the otherwise traumatic realization of the gap and the empty self. For Žižek, this "social reality" is strongly tied to "ideology". As Žižek explains, "the function of ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel" (45). We, therefore, cannot separate fantasy from lived social reality.

Part of the fantasy, of course, is the way in which each individual perceives themselves, contrasted with that which is outside themselves, or "Other". The notions of the Self and Other are separate within the human psyche, and it is the most important part of our social reality because the perceived relation between Self and Other forms our identities. According to Lacan, as an infant, one first experiences the world around exclusively in the realm of the Imaginary (the domain of appearing, of how things appear to us). The Imaginary is developed during the formation of the ego in the "mirror stage". By distinguishing the counterpart (or mirror image) as "other," we have the basis of "identification". This identification constitutes the first awareness of difference, whereupon "the infant transitions into the Symbolic Order, the domain of society and culture, and must acknowledge itself as a distinct entity, separate from the world around it" (Gardiner 6). Within this symbolic realm, the infant must come to terms with the laws of society, culture, and moral behavior. The role the infant must fulfill is a predetermined one—one which presumes and preordains its identity within the structure of family and social networks. The child learns that the Self must be differentiated from that which is Other. It is through the use of

language that “it must withdraw from the Other, both from within itself and its external world” (Ibid). Especially with the introduction of language, the infant is no longer free to simply exist, as it did in the Imaginary realm. It comes, rather, to be defined and given meaning through what becomes its divergent relationship to its external world; it is now a Self, separate from the Other. Through this transition from the Imaginary to Symbolic Order, the child creates a distinct and irreversible separation between Self and the Other – identify is formed as a result (Gardiner 8).

The “Big Other” represents the most extreme conception of otherness which is rooted in the symbolic order. This “Big Other,” as Žižek points out, is the invisible order that structures our experience of reality, the complex network of rules and meanings which makes us see what we see the way we see it (and what we do not see the way we do not see it) (Žižek 119). Žižek states that the “Big Other” does not exist, and that it, too, is imaginary. According to Žižek, “We have the big Other, the symbolic order, with a traumatic element at its heart… The fantasy is conceived as a construction allowing the subject to come to terms with this traumatic kernel… There is nothing ‘behind’ the fantasy; the fantasy is a construction whose function is to hide this void, this ‘nothing’ – that is, the lack of the Other” (148).

The idea relates to the aforementioned concept of the “Other” in that, as Žižek explains, fantasy is a kind of “answer” to the perceived “lack in the Other,” as we desire to have understanding. However, Žižek argues that, “it is at the same time fantasy itself which, so to speak, provides the coordinates of our desire - which constructs the frame enabling us to desire something.” He adds that “The usual definition of fantasy ('an imagined scenario representing the real-ization of desire') is therefore somewhat misleading, or at least ambiguous: in the fantasy-scene, the desire is not fulfilled, 'satisfied', but constituted (given its objects, and so on)” (118). In short, although we use fantasies in order to fill in the blanks regarding our ideas of

mysterious “Others,” fantasy constructs cause us to have the desire for such answers. These fantasies are the sublime object of ideology. It is also the core process in the formation of identity, individual, religious, or national. Psychoanalysis is not simply suggesting that national and cultural identities are constituted through a symbolic order. It goes further to examine the process of such constitution by exploring how desires and drives function in the formation of the symbolic order.

Based on Lacan, Žižek formulates, “Human desire is the desire of the other” (235). Lacan uses the Italian “Che vuoi?” that illustrates the essence of the ever-present questions: “You're telling me that, but what do you want to tell me with it, through it? What is it that you want? What is it that bugs you? What is it in you that makes you so unbearable not only for us, but also for yourself, that you yourself obviously do not control?” According to Žižek, this question mark arising above the curve of “quilting” (“quilting point” or “anchoring point,” a term defined by Lacan “by which the signifier stops the otherwise endless movement of the signification” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 303) to produce the illusion of a fixed meaning “indicates the persistence of a gap between utterance and its enunciation. You demand something of me, but what do you really want, what are you aiming at through this demand?” (154). “This split between demand and desire is what defines the position of the hysterical subject: according to the classic Lacanian formula, the logic of the hysterical demand is 'I'm demanding this of you, but what I'm really demanding of you is to refute my demand because this is not it!'” (124). Within this paradoxical complex, the subject is automatically confronted with a “*Che vuoi*?,” which according to Lacan “leads the subject to the path of his own desire” (“From *Che Vuoi*? to Fantasy” 2009) or with a question of the Other and the inherent mysteries or impossibilities of fulfillment therein. “The Other is addressing him as if he himself possesses the answer to the question of why he has this mandate, but the question

is, of course, unanswerable" (126). The question remains unanswerable because the subject does not understand why he occupies that place that he does within the symbolic network. His own potential answer to this "*che vuoi*?" of the Other can be nothing else than the hysterical question: "Why am I what I'm supposed to be, why have I this mandate? Why am I [a teacher, a master, a king ... or George Kaplan]?…Briefly: 'Why am I what you [the big Other] are saying that I am?'" (Ibid). The formula of fantasy is an answer to this "*che vuoi*?"; it is an attempt to fill out the gap of the question with an answer. The formulation can be visualized in the graph of fantasy ($<>a): "The function of fantasy is to fill the opening in to Other, to conceal its inconsistency" (Ibid).

Popular cultural productions (pieces of entertainment) are fantasies. Such shows as *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* can be used to illustrate how unconscious fantasy works to structure our reality. Žižek's version of Lacan is helpful because, after all, these productions are *public* fantasies (as opposed to private, individual fantasies in the psychoanalytic clinics). The expansion from Lacanian to Marxist through Žižek involves the recognition of popular culture as a public dream – a collective political unconscious. People have unconscious biases and unconscious desires that work in concert with society; as a result, people unknowingly utilize ideology to conceal unpleasant truths from themselves. Works of entertainment, whether viewers are consciously aware of it or not, are a guiding force in constructing fantasy, identity, and ideology; these fantasies in turn shape the society's biases and these biases shape individuals' conceptions.

Struggling with identity is a key theme in *Homeland*. The character of Brody struggles with his identity. During his eight years of captivity, Brody becomes sympathetic to his captors, learns the Arabic language, converts to *Sunni* Islam and agrees to serve Al-Qaeda as a covert operative. After returning to America, Brody is greeted as a hero and uses this media coverage to

gain political power and influence, which he intends to use to engage in various plots for Al-Qaeda (e.g., assassinating the Vice President). Brody converts to a new religion, and has conflicted loyalties; sometimes Brody appears loyal to Al-Qaeda, other times he appears loyal to America. First, consider the fluctuating question in *Homeland* regarding Brody's loyalty. During the course of the series, the viewer repeatedly questions whether Brody is sincerely loyal to Al-Qaeda, or if his loyalties have lain with America the whole time.

Brody's identity is a constructed product of conflict and contradiction. Žižek argues that both Freud (in looking at dreams) and Marx (in looking at markets) got close to a kernel of truth regarding to human identity (11). This kernel involves the idea that human identity is shaped by forces beyond their control; in other words, human identity is putty shaped by the hands of society. This concept can be seen in Žižek's thoughts on how people are shaped by economic forces beyond their control, which subvert their freedoms. Žižek explores how the concept of "freedom" is "false" (in that when people engage in market transactions they lose their freedom). He claims that "a specific freedom (that of the worker to sell freely his own labor on the market) ... is the opposite of effective freedom: by selling his labor 'freely' the worker loses his freedom - the real content of this free act of sale is the worker's enslavement to capital" (21-22). Thus, social and economic forces beyond Brody's control shaped him in ways that robbed him of his freedom while shaping his ideology.

Brody is first shaped by his middle-class white background and U.S. Marine Corps training. Brody, in effect, sells his "freedom" for a wage from the army; in doing so, he loses his individual freedom through enslavement to the military-industrial complex, and in turn has his ideas shaped by military culture. However, once he is immersed in his captivity by Al-Qaeda, his identity changes again. Brody's language metamorphoses from English to Arabic. Brody's

religion transforms him from being a non-practicing Christian to one who is practicing Islam. Part of his immersion is that he is given the "freedom" to choose to be a teacher of an Al-Qaeda leader's child; thus, Brody sells his freedom once again. Thus, in many ways, Brody is like the aforementioned putty; when placed into new hands he takes on a new form and new loyalty. Brody is shaped by the very entities and bodies to which he sells his freedom; both with the U.S Military and Al-Qaeda, Brody sells his labor (as a soldier, teacher or propagandist), and each time Brody's freedom to engage in these trades results in his own freedom being undermined. Therefore, Brody's repeated acts of forfeiting his freedom to larger organizations make him who he is.

Here we must clarify that *Homeland* is not illustrating Lacan and Žižek in its character development, although the series certainly works out a complicated identity crisis. My interest is not only in using Žižekian theory to analyze the characters. My interest is also in *Homeland* as an American fantasy. Brody's identity crisis is a perverted reflection of the American struggle with the gap between its international social reality and its own ideological construction as complex social-political discourses are evolving and polarizing.

The two series represent different ideologies in addition to the focus on otherness. The underlying message in *Little Mosque on the Prairie* serves to uncover the complexity of Muslim culture and society. The characters in the show *Little Mosque* reflect the diversity of Muslim society illustrating the varying ideologies of those who are the followers of Islam, and opposes the perception that Islam is homogenous. Ideology is a system of meaning to help the audience explain the world. According to Žižek, "ideology is not only what people, 'think' or 'know' but also—even primarily—what they do" (Kim 9). Through showing different characters from different backgrounds, *Little Mosque* challenges hegemonic ideologies through the various roles

of diverse Muslims. For example, the series reveals the beliefs, perceptions, explanations and values of Islam through the feminist Muslim doctor, Rayyan Hamoudi, who wears the *hijab,* and the leader of the Muslim community (*the Imam*), Amaar Rashid, as well as other characters.

Homeland, however, includes various messages that the media often seems eager to impose, such as the presentation of the stereotypical Muslim as a dangerous terrorist. *Homeland* works to construct an artificial, homogenous reality. The ideology that supports the concept of the terrorist Muslim targets people from a society that differs from the Western "norm". The U.S. media has the ability to manipulate the viewer by reproducing the notion of otherness. The series, wittingly or not, draws a clear binary of "us" vs. "them" through portraying a homogenous picture of Muslims. The different representations of Muslims seen in television series such as *Little Mosque* and *Homeland* are important to consider carefully, because contrasting various ideologies and seeing misrepresentation and pervasive prejudice contrasted against a more balanced presentation is essential for one to become aware of the entire picture. In the next chapter, I analyze the "othering" and stereotypes in *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* by providing different examples using Žižek's theory.

Chapter 4

Othering and Stereotypes in *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and *Homeland*

Oftentimes our own perceptions of others are based upon the generalizations and stereotypes projected collectively among people. Social media can reinforce or challenge such collective projection. Over-generalized images of Arabs have been sustained in different U.S. Hollywood movies. Media analyst, Jack Shaheen, explored over one thousand movies dating back to Hollywood's earliest days. Of all the films he has examined, he finds only 50 of these films portrayed Arabs even-handedly and 12 films demonstrated positive depictions. Jack Tchen, who teaches cultural history at New York University, tells Shaheen's story, "It was a Saturday morning in 1974 and his kids were watching cartoons on television. His children came to him and said, Daddy, Daddy, I saw a bad Arab on TV. And he began paying attention to those kinds of representations" (Jaafari 2017). Shaheen elaborates, "Once we begin to humanize Arabs and Muslims to project them as we project other people — no better, no worse — then the stereotype gradually diminishes" (Ibid). In his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, Shaheen observes that Arab men on screen usually have a black beard, wear a headdress and dark sunglasses, and ride in limousines, as well as bringing attention to the fact that harem girls, oil wells, or camels are usually in the background. Moreover, the Arab men commonly brandish automatic weapons, pray to Allah, and then commit acts of terrorism. The non-negative stereotypes that Shaheen identifies such as headdresses, dark sunglasses, and limousines do not have a harmful effect as opposed to the negative stereotypes, such as every Arab/Muslim is associated with terrorist activities, holding a weapon while praying to Allah. Arab women are usually portrayed as either harem girls or belly dancers, as oppressed, veiled, and only occasionally also represented as terrorists. Repetitious and culturally damaging images of the Arab people support the negative, stereotyped image of this group of people being passed from generation to generation. Still largely absent from American media is the important shift to a

representation of Arabs and Muslims who are business owners, teachers, artists, neighbors, engineers, and so much more; the people who have made lasting contributions to their societies.

Stereotypes stem from the lack of diverse images and the continuous distortion of all that currently exists. Stereotyping is considered "an essentialist representation of a certain group or category of people that is widely shared in society in the form of texts or images" (Es 11). It is typically constructed by dominant groups; "the ethnic majority speaks of and for a marginalized group (such as an ethnic minority), thereby reinforcing the marginalized position of the latter" (Ibid). Stereotypes can therefore ascribe negative attributes to members of minority groups that do not necessarily have these traits (Ibid). One effect of stereotypes is that it can create segregate "us" from "them". Scholars from different cultural studies describe the process of othering "in which one group of people label another as different, an embodiment of everything that they are not" (Duffett 37). Social groups of varying identities differentiate themselves in society through ways that are rooted in mistaken perceptions and claims to superiority, ultimately highlighting the process of othering (Ibid). As Van Veeren points out, "this construction of terrorists as 'outside,' therefore also facilitates the understanding of terrorists as 'real enemies'… as their presence outside means that they are existentially distinct from 'us' and 'our friends'" (Van Veeran 2009). It is much easier to perceive a binary distinction between friend and enemy, "us versus them," when the element of geography/space is introduced, as it is in *Homeland,* with the representation of Middle Eastern countries in the series.

Žižek has a philosophical comment regarding 'us and them', which is evident when he discusses the notion of the "clash of civilizations" in his book *Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*. According to Žižek, "there is a partial truth in the notion- witness the surprise of the average American: 'How is it possible that these people

display and practice such a disregard for their own lives?' Is the obverse of this surprise not the rather sad fact that we, in the First World countries, find it more and more difficult even to imagine a public or universal cause for which one would be ready to sacrifice one's life?" (Žižek 40). The phenomenon of the divide that separates 'us' from 'them' is questioned by Žižek. Is it really a fight between the uncomplicated dualism of good and evil, civilized and uncivilized? The split between First and Third world countries, Žižek argues, "runs more and more along the lines of the opposition between leading a long and satisfying life full of material and cultural wealth and dedicating one's life to some transcendent Cause" (Ibid). Rather than accepting an easy division of 'us versus them', Žižek looks to global capitalism, economics, and geopolitics for their roles in the "clash of civilizations". By analyzing the practices within, and the history of the United States, as well as the motivation and nature of terrorism, Žižek questions the simple divide, in which the self is good and the signifier of exclusion is pure evil.

In light of the "clash of civilizations," I shall analyze the process of othering and stereotypes in *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and *Homeland*. Both TV series are products of North America's clash of civilizations. However, with different contexts – one produced by a Canadian public broadcast institute (CBC) and the other by American's right wing television chain (Fox) – they demonstrate major differences as well.

The storyline of *Homeland* is built upon a stereotypical portrayal of Middle Eastern terrorism. The terrorists represented in the first three seasons are part of the process of "Othering," and those being "othered" are understood as being dangerous to the U.S. The perception creates the stereotype of terrorists as entities that are foreign and geographically distant. In various episodes of *Homeland,* the enemies are represented as both foreign (mainly Muslim and Arab terrorists) and domestic (such as the American marine and the Vice-President

William Walden). The Arab people in this series are often presented as being members of terrorist organizations.

In the first two seasons of *Homeland*, we can observe that the majority of terrorists are Muslim and are represented as a fearful fantasized Other. Many of them live among everyday Americans while being involved in acts of terrorism. For example, Mansour al-Zahrani is a middle-aged Saudi diplomat serving in Washington, who, as it turns out, is involved with al-Qaeda. In reality, Saudi diplomats represent the Kingdom and the Monarchy, which is a target of terrorist attacks. In 2011, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, Adel Jubeir, was the target of an attempted terrorism attack, which was subsequently foiled by the FBI (Lee, et al. 2011). Another character, Raqim Faisel, is a Saudi professor who came to the US in the 1990s to study. He is married to an American woman, and both of them cynically use the American flag to hide a secret terrorist code. Those characters are considered the Other (the imaginary). They are fantasized versions of America's enemies.

Through the realm of fantasy created by these characters, one may approach and satisfy the desires of their real life experiences. According to Žižek "Fantasy functions as a construction, as an imaginary scenario filling out the void" (128). Fantasy provides us an object for our attention and by making that object subservient to our will, which enables us to enjoy a magical power that we long for but can never truly possess. While Abu Nazir, the leader of al-Qaeda may represent an actual existence, the other two as fictional existences project fear, distrust, and skepticism onto all Arabs with the added negative that they are not terrorists from the Middle East, but that they are terrorists inside the U.S. who hold respectable social positions.

Thus, adopting an extremist view or committing terrorism is not something that is limited to Arab, Muslim, or immigrant individuals. The threat of violence or terrorism continues to be

both domestic and international. Yet, through the projection of the self onto otherness, we can reveal that everything "good" about the other is discarded, which is due to Western imperialism, colonialism, and mistreatment of others. Beyond the projection of our "repressed" evil side onto the Other is that which we accept "as the 'authentic' other when we truly open ourselves up to them, the good, innocent other, is also our ideological fantasy" (Žižek 2016). As Žižek points out, "the way the terrorist threat is depicted in our media is not simply a reflection of their reality, but also of our ideological (mis)conceptions" (Žižek 2001). Thus, the fear does not manifest from terrorists abroad but rather from terrorists within our own country.

Although many of the Middle Eastern characters are American citizens in the series, they are still the first to be suspected of any terrorist attacks. For example, in *Homeland,* one of the questions that is tackled in the first two seasons is, "whom do you look out for when tracking terrorists?" (Al-Arian 2012). In S2E4, the series depicts Carrie Mathison, a CIA agent, and her counterparts filtering potential suspects for possible links to Abu Nazir. They decide to "prioritize" by making the decision to examine Middle Easterners and North Africans first, which they refer to as "dark skinned ones". In their move to excuse this blatantly racist practice, they dismiss the idea that they are participating in racial profiling, and instead refer to it as "actual profiling" - yet they are clearly using racial profiling as what they view to be a legitimate tool to identify potential terrorist suspects efficiently and effectively. This example shows how Muslim/Arabs are considered to be the dangerous "outsiders." In this way, the "otherness" created in the sphere of geography/space creates a fear of "intruders" who are not like "us," in the eyes of the North American majority.

Indeed, even when a white character, hero and U.S. Marine, Sergeant Brody, becomes a terrorist, his Islamic "turn" is represented as a prerequisite to becoming a terrorist (Castonguay

143). Various characters in the series, such as Brody's wife, cannot accept that Brody is Muslim. Brody is portrayed instead as a person manipulated by a Muslim character, and the CIA suspect Brody to be a terrorist who works for Abu Nazir. When Brody's wife finds out that he is Muslim, she throws the Quran at him and says, "These are the people who tortured you! These are the people who, if they did find out Dana and Xander were having sex, would stone her to death in a soccer stadium" (S2E1). According to Durkay, "She's expressing the show's core philosophy. Muslims — be they Arab, Iranian or Pakistani — are brutal terrorists who can't be trusted, and they're all out to get us" (Durkay 2014). Brody's wife therefore, confirms the stereotypical image of Muslim as violent and brutal. After she tosses the Quran, she says, "I thought you put this crazy stuff behind you. I thought we were getting somewhere. [...] I married a U.S. Marine, this... this cannot happen. You have a wife, two kids, you are a congressman in the running to become vice–president. It cannot happen, you get that, right?" (S2E1). This conversation emphasizes the accepted concept of American reality without really getting to the core issue. The fact is that her reaction of tossing the Quran is exaggerated. This example is symbolically violent, destructive to a cultural value rather than an actual act of violence, and it was an act that fulfills the U.S. audience's fantasy of "hurting" the core of the Muslim faith, the Quran.

Furthermore, the majority of people view Muslims as a marginalized group that is central to the narrative. This narrative is partially differentiated but indicates previously formed racial and religious stereotypes. For example, one of *Homeland*'s episodes clearly shows the religious and racial stereotype. In S3E2, CIA director Saul Berenson indicates his displeasure with being sent a young Muslim woman to assist him on a mission, not feeling that she is an expert in the field. Saul's character is created to project the fantasy of a consolidation of Jewishness within the U.S. For example, *Homeland* shows an example of assimilation and of marking Muslims as

'extreme' Others - in comparison to the 'Jew' as Other from the last century. Saul's character is determined, sober, reserved and considered credible even in emotional scenes. He is made to be liked by the audience. However, in this scene, the young Muslim analyst, Farah Sherazi, is discriminated against by Saul when she appears in the CIA because she wears the *hijab*. Saul therefore formulates his anger by saying, "You wearing that thing on your head is one big 'Fuck you' to the people who would have been your co–workers, [...]. So, if you need to wear it, if you really need to ... which is your right, you better be the best analyst we've ever seen" (S3E2). When I watched that scene, all I could think of is how a person would feel if part of their identity was attacked. As the tears streamed down Farrah's face, it was clear that she felt being threatened. This scene exhibits blatant Islamophobia, criticizing Islam as a religion. The religious clothing worn demonstrates an unacceptable political statement that can also be seen as an unacceptable social construct, due to the terrorist attacks that were seen within the narrative. The scene indicated a sort of national exclusion process, implying the answer of who is really a threat to the nation/community. Through these false representations, the Muslim religion appears to be a threat to the American nation.

Homeland portrays the Middle East, and specifically Saudi Arabia, as a backward country, where women live miserably compared to the West. This image is shown when interrogating Al-Zahrani, the Saudi diplomat, to reveal information about Abu Nazir's terrorist organization; Carrie threatens to deport his daughter, Janine. Carrie tells Al-Zahrani, "We would deport her. And we would make sure that she was not welcome in England or Germany or France or Italy, or even all forgiving Scandinavia. We would make sure that she had no choice but to go back to Saudi Arabia and get fat and wear a burqa for the rest of her miserable life" (S1E10). Carrie perceives the West as being comprised of the 'free' countries, where women are

free, while considering Saudi Arabia as a country that has an oppressive system. Carrie states that if Janine goes to Saudi Arabia, she would then have a miserable life in which she would have to wear a *burqa* and get fat. Carrie's view does not represent the Middle East; it represents the ego of the United States. Through Carrie's viewpoint, American popular culture is supporting the image of a 'free' and 'sensible country' (Cooper 2015). This self-concept of superiority is also shown when Carrie criticizes Scandinavia for being too "forgiving". The example is a stereotypical image of Muslim women being oppressed in the Middle East and portrayed differently than those of the West's 'free' society. There is no doubt that the West and the East have different rules and traditions; however, this difference does not mean that Saudi Arabia is a prison where women become oppressed by getting fat and wearing the *burqa*. According to the OECD Health data, the United States rates the highest obesity in 2017 ("Obesity Update 2017"). This data shows American hypocrisy and obsession with appearances. This data refutes the underlying assumption of Carrie in the show.

In comparison to the Middle East, a liberal version of feminism is sometimes mobilized by American media and foreign policy – a quick consideration of the United States' current politically "right wing" resistance to women's reproductive rights shows how ironic this truly is. One example is "outlawing all abortions, even if the woman's life is in danger" (Jordan 2018). Ron Hood, "a Republican state representative who introduced the total abortion ban in Ohio", believes that "women could be criminally punished for aborting an 'unborn human'" (Ibid). Furthermore, he said, "prosecutors would decide what charges to seek, just as they do in cases of manslaughter or murder" (Ibid). Although there is lot of room for improving women's conditions in the Middle East, a "feminist critique" of the Middle East as portrayed in *Homeland* is indeed manipulated as a diversion. For some aspects of life in the Middle East, it is true that women

have more limited freedom. Although, one must keep in mind that this limitation does not mean that all those women are "fat" or have a "miserable life". The feminist diversion mentioned above often does play a role in world politics. America constantly uses the "liberation of women" as an excuse for invasion. Such was the case in Iraq. When the "weapons of mass destruction" excuse was found to be false, the U.S. made the "liberation of women," the noble cause behind the wartime propaganda. Carrie's viewpoint in the show is not just a misrepresentation; it is part of the propaganda. The U.S. needs to find moral superiority to dominate the Middle East. Thus, by using Žižek's concept of "ideological quilting," he describes that "in ideological space float signifiers like 'freedom,' 'state,' 'justice,' 'peace'… and then their chain is supplemented with some master-signifier… which retroactively determines their meaning" (Žižek, 113). In this example, "women's freedom" is one of the quilting points and the master-signifier in this case is "America's views of Muslims". In contrast, Canada has a vested interest in keeping its national identity separate from the U.S. It is, perhaps, more like Scandinavia, searching for a moral superiority over the U.S. In Canada, Muslim women's "diversity" is still the "ideological quilting point" but "multiculturalism" is the master-signifier, which can be seen clearly in CBC's *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

Yet another example of Arab and Muslim stereotypes is Raqim Faisel, a Saudi professor working at Bryden University in Washington, D.C. He is married to an American woman named Aileen Margaret Morgan, whom he met somewhere between 1991 and 1996 in Saudi Arabia. As part of an al-Qaeda plot, Morgan and Faisel are assigned to purchase a house within sniper range of Marine One (The helicopter of the United States President) landing pad (Høie 45). They cynically use a symbol of patriotism, the American flag, as a secret terrorist code. Using these nationalist symbols portrays American Muslims as duplicitous and normalizes this concept in the

minds of viewers. In a CIA conversation between David Estes (the Deputy Director of the CIA) and Danny Galvez (Lebanese Muslim), Faisel's religion and ethnicity is brought up almost as soon as he is considered a suspect:

Estes: "What's he an assistant professor of?"

Galvez: "Mechanical engineering. Tenure track. Generally liked. Published, peer reviewed."

Estes: "Muslim?"

Galvez: "Yeah, but not a Koran thumper. Worships at Khalid Muhammad."

Estes: "What about those trips to Pakistan?"

Galvez: "Lecturing at the University of Lahore. It all checks out."

This conversation illustrates that, in the eyes of Estes (who is ruthless and strict, and he endorsed a bomb strike at a school in the Middle East and killed 83 innocent children in order to get closer to catch Abu Nazir), being from the Middle East (the same place from which Abu Nazir's terrorist organization operates), and being a Muslim who visits his country of origin are traits/behaviours that are red flags with a terrorist. Both Faisel's ethnicity and country of origin reinforce this stereotypical image. Moreover, although his wife Aileen appears later to be the main terrorist and the one that drags him "into this," the CIA does not at first interrogate Aileen and doubt her to be a suspect because her traits do not fit into the typical terrorist profile. However, this example could also be interpreted in another way, making Aileen as the main terrorist could mean that the writer of *Homeland* understands the complexities and wants the viewer to see that those stereotypes are not true. The prejudice of the characters is not shared by the creators. To some extent, they seem to be educating the public in the right direction, that Arabs/Muslims are not always the terrorists.

Building on Faisel, the wrong man plot, this episode is complex in the sense that the true terrorist is the American girl and the CIA's interrogation goes the wrong way as the investigator

makes incorrect assumptions by racial profiling. In a sense, one may argue that the storyline problematizes the stereotype. However, the psychological effect remains, with the viewer feeling that every Islamic citizen is directly or indirectly associated with terrorism. Aileen is Faisel's hidden terrorist "truth". Žižek calls this strategy "the dialectical paradox". To reinforce the anti-Islamic ideology, the dominant discourse has to open a space for the Other; however, that space must stay within the references of the dominant discourse:

> The dialectical paradox lies in the fact that the particular struggle playing a hegemonic role, far from enforcing a violent suppression of the differences, opens the very space for the relative autonomy of the particular struggles: the feminist struggle, for example, is made possible only through reference to democratic-egalitarian political discourse (Žižek 97).

The Muslim struggle, likewise, is made possible through the seemingly egalitarian wrong man plot in *Homeland* as if the show is being fair, treating everyone as equals, understanding the flaw of the investigator's racial profiling, yet after all, the ideological field stays the same. Aileen is the terrorist, and Faisel is dragged into it. Democratic-egalitarianism is *the* ideological nodal point of the United States. The hegemony is always there but only in disguise. Even when attempts are made to acknowledge the unfair ideology, there is nothing being done to dismantle it.

Furthermore, in S1E7, while Brody and Carrie share some quality time at a cabin, they get drunk and discover they both have feelings for each other. Brody thought that Carrie was manipulating him by using sex to get more information. Brody confesses to Carrie that he is a Muslim:

> Carrie (pointing at his hands): "What's that?"

> Brody: “What? Nothing.”
>
> Carrie: “No, it’s not nothing.”
>
> Brody: “It’s a habit when I don’t have my prayer beads.”
>
> Carrie (surprised): “You’re a Muslim?”
>
> Brody: “Yeah. You live in despair for eight years, you might turn to religion too. And the King James Bible was not available.”
>
> [...]
>
> Brody [explaining why he lied about having met Nazir]: “Because he offered me comfort...and I took it.”
>
> Carrie: “And you became his follower? A soldier of his jihad?”
>
> Brody: “No. No. Jesus, don't you understand anything I’m telling you. I’m not made of that stuff. I’m no hero. I have nothing to give. I was broken living in the dark for years and a man walked in and he was kind to me. And I loved him.”

Brody attempts to deconstruct the perception of the stereotypical Muslim enemy by differentiating between Abu Nazir’s terrorist regime and Islam at large. He argues that his chosen religion is not at all related to terrorism. It is also clear that perceptions of Brody as a terrorist are far different than perceptions of Islamic terrorists, and this perceptions connects to the contrasting media representations of aberrant, “lone wolf” white terrorists, and the expected terrorism committed by Muslims, as that is seen as “normal” behaviour for this “othered” group. For example, the series presents Abu Nazir, the leader of the terrorist organization, in the first season of *Homeland,* as a violent Muslim enemy, where they link Islam at large with terrorism. When we first look at Abu Nazir, we see a confirmation of the stereotypical image of the Middle Eastern terrorist--a bearded man with brown skin. In some scenes through Brody’s flashbacks, Abu Nazir is given human qualities, rather than being a crude terrorist, making him a complex character, grey rather than black-and-white. Nevertheless, the color scheme is only there to make the dialectical paradox look more realistic. Deep down, it is still in a stereotypical outline in black and white.

Part of Žižek's insight is that all symbolic representations are imagined: that is, there is no correct representation. Every representation has to be a misrepresentation because of its very nature as an imaginary ideological product. However, this recognition does not imply that all representations are equal; they imagine differently and therefore project different visions of others. These differences are important because alternative representations can help to give a fuller and fairer picture. To create a contrast, I chose *Little Mosque on the Prairie* as a dialectical counterpart.

Although many Muslims in Northern American television are either ignored or stereotyped as villains, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is among the few series to depict the everyday life of North American Muslims. It dramatizes a variety of issues surrounding Muslim people and is therefore useful for both the Muslim and non-Muslim audience to develop mutual understanding. The series also highlights the variety within Muslim communities, eliminating the notion of uniformity. Even in such a small community, the represented Muslims from Nigeria (Fatima), Lebanon (Yasir), Pakistan (Baber), Canadian-Muslim (Amaar) and Canadian-convert (Sarah). In addition to these differences, there are those who are progressive and others who are conservative; and those who are observant contrasted with others who are not overly concerned about their lack of observance. Although the typed character generalizations are still present, the show transforms uniform stereotypes into a diverse mosaic, which helps to move Muslims from the foreign realm to that of the familiar.

According to Zarqa Nawaz, the director of *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, her aim and hope is that the comedy will alter the public's perceptions of Muslims. She explains: "a lot of people don't see Muslims in the media; they only see the male terrorist or the oppressed Muslim women. They get a skewed perception of the Muslim community. This is a show that examines

the ordinary lives of ordinary Muslims. Muslims are parents… they are holding down jobs; they are paying off their homes; they are paying off their bills and no one ever gets to see that side of the Muslim world" (Chao 2015). Nawaz, therefore, is diversifying the "type" characters against a common overgeneralization through comedy. For example, the leader of the Muslim community, the *Imam* (Ammar), is a young liberal who does not have a beard and believes that "religious and racial haters will destroy the world" (S1E1).

There are several thematic elements in the series, such as terrorism, gender segregation, women's roles and rights, Islamic perspectives, interfaith community and prejudice. The theme of terrorism is explored, for example, in S1E1. Here, Ammar Rashid (the *Imam*) proves to the town of Mercy that Muslims are not terrorists. Moreover, in S2E9 Baber cannot give a keynote speech at a conference in Chicago because he thinks that he is a suspected terrorist and on the American no fly list. Ammar and Rayyan encourage him to fight by going to the American consulate. They find out that he makes up this excuse because he is afraid of flying. Through this comedic example, the viewer is invited to take a closer look at similar real-life oppressive practices.

The theme of gender segregation is also explored in S1E2, in which Baber (the conservative voice) has decided to put up a barrier to separate men and women during prayer. Rayyan protests against the barrier. A battle of the sexes continues until Ammar suggests that the barrier stay as it is, but half up and those who want it could pray behind it. In S2E1, Rayyan wants to give a community announcement at the mosque. Ammar apologizes to Rayyan that he cannot let women do the announcement, as people are not ready for this yet. Rayyan says that women speak at the mosque in the time of the prophet. In the end, Sarah (Rayyan's mom) gives the announcement but her position of non-interfering in the facts undermines what must be a

victory for Muslim women everywhere. In S3E18, Baber insists that Muslim women should have a separate mosque entrance. The women object, saying that this is segregation. Amaar finds a solution when he changes the debate's terms.

We see the women's roles and rights theme at the centre of the dramatic conflict in S1E4. In this episode, Rayyan suggests that Fatima take an aquafit class which will help in the recovery of her sprained ankle. When they find out that the instructor of the swimming class is male (even though he is gay and has no interest in women), they protest to have a female instructor because as Muslims, they cannot appear in their swimsuit in front of men. In the end, Fatima wears an Islamic bathing suit so that she is fully covered. In S2E2, a mystery woman shows up at the mosque wearing the *niqab* (full face covering). As Sarah finds it oppressive, she and Fred find a law where Mercy banned the face covering a long time ago. However, Rayyan defends the woman's right by covering her face too. At the end, there is no law prohibiting women from covering their faces. In S4E16, Baber attempts to ban the wearing of pants by women at the mosque. Rayyan refuses. Amaar agrees with Rayyan, but this causes him to get fired. In S5E9, the women at the mosque appoint Rayyan to be one of the mosque board leaders. Baber finds a clause in the mosque's constitution which was instituted by a conservative faction that forbids women from participating. Worse yet, Amaar agrees to support the constitution. Later, when Ammar noticed that his fiancé, Rayyan, is mad at him, he decides to review the rules and change it so that Rayyan can hold the position on the mosque board.

As shown in the examples above, many of the themes in *Little Mosque on the Prairie* emphasize women's issues. The writer/director Zarqa Nawaz advocates for greater attention to be paid to various Muslim women's issues, giving cause to the recurring theme of gender. The sitcom clearly attempts to challenge the representations of Muslim women in current popular

culture, and it shows the complex issues that they confront both inside and outside Muslim communities. The show attempts to broaden the representation of Muslim women, and challenges the stereotypes of Muslim women as oppressed, exotic, traditional and submissive. The female protagonists in the show are fundamental to the sitcom's plot and story. Nawaz's creative and intellectual direction, as well as her personal involvement in shifting the cultural norms, is evident when the females wrestle with various issues including gender roles, segregation, women's dress codes, barriers in the mosque, and many more. Having these issues addressed in a popular sitcom is a significant and noteworthy development in the movement to fight the stereotyped images of Middle Eastern people in popular culture. Rayyan, in particular, represents a 'modern' Muslim woman. She is an independent and committed professional when it comes to defending Muslims on important issues (especially women's rights issues), and is very convincing due to her persuasive and outspoken nature.

Muslim women, therefore, have active roles and human rights. They can take leadership roles, such as siting on the board, and demand to be treated equally. The fact is that there is no evidence from the Quran saying otherwise. These patriarchal sensibilities are mostly originated from the cultural traditions that accept and reinforce such rules, and changes can happen. For example, in Saudi Arabia, women are appointed to the (Majlis Al-Shura) consultative council. The royal order states that "Women, selected as members of the Shura Council, will enjoy full rights of membership, be committed to their duties, responsibilities and assume their jobs" ("Saudi Women Appointed to the Consultative Council"). Most of the women hold doctorate degrees and have previously held positions in universities and civil societies across many different fields. Thus, no one excludes women or underestimates their power as the U.S. media

habitually portray. One of the problems is that countries, their individual problems and histories, are not differentiated from Islam.

Islamic perspectives are shown in S2E4. Although Islam forbids gambling, Sarah still buys lottery tickets. When she wins, she and Yasir hide it from Rayyan. Sarah ultimately donates the money anonymously to charity. In S2E8, Baber gets into a conflict over the Muslim concept of "The Evil Eye" where Muslims need to say 'Mashallah,' 'God has willed,' to express their appreciation, joy or thanksgiving for an event or person. Amaar inadvertently gives Baber the evil eye. But is his bad luck the will of God? or his own fault? In S2E10, as Christmas approaches, Sarah misses the fun and spectacle of her pre-conversion Christmases. Rayyan promises her mom to make the Muslim festival of Eid al Adha a little more Christmasy to cheer her up. Meanwhile, Baber and Layla will perform an Islamic play at the school, however, as depicting the prophets is forbidden, which will put a damper on things, Layla decides to read an interfaith passage from *A Christmas Carol*. In S3E5, Rayyan and her fiancé JJ team up to mislead Fred's understanding about Islam in order to mock him. But when they find out that Fred's spreading the misconceptions about Islam on the air, they've got to convince Fred that they misled him. In S3E6, Yasir joins a team called the Prairie Dog Lodge in order to make new business contacts. However, he discovers that he cannot participate in many of the activities such as gambling and drinking. Things get worse when Amaar learns that Yasir will join the lodge on a forbidden hunting trip as Islam frowns upon killing. Through these Islamic perspectives themes, non-Muslims will get a glimpse of the Islamic religion of what is *halal* and *haram* (acceptable and unacceptable under Islam).

On the theme of interfaith community, we see in S2E12 that Fred Tupper criticizes the Muslim community on his show by mocking Amaar's attempts to curl; saying to Ammar that

"Curling isn't Muslim". Ammar decides to enter the curling tournament to challenge Fred's team and make the world's first Muslim curling team. Rayyan is excellent at curling and switches to Fred's team. She eventually replaces Fred as the leader of his team. For revenge, Fred bans her from participating in the game of curling because of her *hijab*. However, they end up winning and proving to Fred that Muslims can curl too. In S3E13, Fred receives disturbing news when he visits Rayyan's clinic. He then decides to change his life radically, especially his antagonistic relationship with the Muslim community. In S4E1, the welcoming Rev. Magee is replaced by Rev. Thorne, who wants Amaar and the Muslims out of the church. He later realizes that his congregants like having the mosque around. In S4E18, Rev. Thorne expels the Muslims from the church. Muslims have to find another place to pray. In the meantime, an unexpected visit by an Archbishop excited to see the mosque inside a church leaves Rev. Thorne no choice but to ask the Muslims to come back; and they accept. In S5E7, an accident happens at the mosque and is misread as a hate crime. Sarah covers for the mistake that the Mayor has accidentally made. The Mayor mends fences between the Muslims and Anglicans. Those themes make the viewer think about how Muslim live, and how different they are from other religions.

The theme of prejudice is dramatized in S4E15, in which Rev. Thorne supports Baber's attempt to have a radio show and hopes that Baber's extreme views will agitate anti-Muslim feelings. When his plan works, Amaar has no choice but to conspire with Fred to stop Baber from being on the air. S4E17, after getting Amaar fired, Baber becomes the new *Imam*, allowing some radical Muslims into the mosque. Things become worse when they get more fundamentalists than he bargained for and they frighten the Anglicans. He has no choice but to give Rev. Thorne the excuse he needs to act. In S5E1 Rev. Thorne finds the town, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, has turned on him after he turned against the Muslims. He then tries to find a

new way to fit in. S6E1, as they were returning from their honeymoon, Rayyan is nervous at customs because of her *hijab*. When the officer asks them about the purpose of their trip, Rayyan answers, “visiting family” while Ammar says that they are coming back from their honeymoon. Then Rayyan blurts to the custom officer, “Look, here is the deal, my mom and dad split up and my dad decides to stay in Lebanon, because he's Lebanese... but he's not a suicide bomber. Not ALL Muslims are suicide bombers.” Ammar tries to change the subject, as he is confused about why would she say that. Rayyan interrupts: “Oh, and before you ask, no, my husband doesn’t make me wear this *hijab*, I choose to wear it.” The officer congratulates them on their marriage and simply pokes fun at them for arguing. In a comedic framework, the episode succeeds in showing how other people might think about other society, and what picture they might have in their minds.

The themes in the above examples have been carefully chosen and identified to suit and illustrate the research questions. The scope determined that *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is both breaking down stereotypes related to those themes and normalizing them. My analysis is based on the keywords found in different episodes. For example, I found that *Little Mosque on the Prairie* referred to ideas associated with terrorism, gender segregation, women roles, and rights, etc. These themes are important to compare and contrast with the way in which other themes are represented on a different TV show. Through examining keywords from a more theoretical perspective, I can find data that directly links to my research. The themes are really speaking to the director’s understanding of how prejudice against Muslims works in Canada. The drama is orchestrated to tackle the general misconceptions. However, how far the politics go depends on how much the radical a turn the director is willing to take. The conservative Baber is cute and

funny, and the women often win (with compromises of course). The show is a liberal Muslim's fantasy; reality is much harsher.

The characters of Ammar Rashid and Rayyan Hamoudi are presented as 'moderate' and 'liberal' Muslims. They challenge the stereotypes of Muslim as being extremist, terrorist, violent, and exotic. Although they are practicing Islam and committed to their faith, they are educated and open-minded. Furthermore, both characters have successfully balanced their commitment to their faith and their integration into North American society. They understand and apply the Islamic principles and respond to doctrinal questions of the Muslim community. The image of the modern Muslim created by these characters plays an important role in identifying and reinforcing notions of the "acceptable" within the Canadian society. Those characters 'normalize' the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In contrast, Baber Siddiqui and Fatima Dinssa represent the traditional Muslims. They both hold conservative perspectives. For example, Baber is the patriarchal and traditional voice as he supports a separate entrance for women, a barrier in the mosque, and women's dress code (no pants), like Fatima, who also supports the barrier and affirms the dress code for women. Yasir and Sarah Hamoudi are presented as the cultural Muslims. Yasir is not devout; he is mainly interested in his business endeavors. Although he attempts to find a comfortable place for the Muslim community, he does not precisely abide by Islamic doctrine, customs and practices. Sarah, his wife, the converted Muslim, is able to maintain her reputation within both the Muslim and non-Muslim settings, despite her willingness to challenge various norms. In the show, she uses her skin tone to settle disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims, where she moves smoothly between the two groups. Sarah is the character who asks all the questions about Muslim norms that many non-Muslim Canadians always want to ask, but do not feel comfortable

doing so. Her status as the insider (a Muslim and white Canadian) puts her in an exceptional position to express these popular questions. The character of Rev. Magee is considered the well-intentioned and benevolent ally. He and Ammar discuss different topics such as their congregations, vocations, and faith communities. His character projects the image of a tolerant Canadian who accepts others, very different from Rev. Throne who is intolerant of Muslims and their cultural diversity.

Of course, this cultural diversity is "imaginary," which is conceptually not different from *Homeland*. However, it is from a different fantasy, one that is in tune with the Canadian version of multiculturalism. Its association with CBC is, therefore, important concerning the context and discourse behind the scene. In a way, the show's imaginary Other is the American ideology embedded in the media stereotypes of such shows as *Homeland*.

The writer of *Little Mosque on the Prairie,* Zarqa Nawaz, wanted to counter the stereotypes about Muslims by helping the viewers to understand them better. To counter stereotypes means to widen the range of characters represented, as a way to help the viewers to know more about the variety of Muslims. For example, the show featured a wide range of Muslim characters, a feminist doctor, an ex-lawyer *imam*, and a café owner, but not a single terrorist. According to Conway, "two of the most compelling recent books on Muslims in North America- Evelyn Alsultany's (2012) *Arabs and Muslims in the Media* and Mucahit Bilici's (2012) *Finding Mecca in America* identify *Little Mosque* as a show that promised to break from the conventional logic linking Muslims to terrorism in North American media" (6). Thus, *Little Mosque* pays specific attention to the inclusion of Muslim characters with different societal perceptions in order to show non-Muslim viewers how Muslims see the world. The differences help to counter the stereotypes of Muslims, such as terrorist intent, that many viewers presuppose

and which are reinforced in the media through fictional narratives.

What makes the show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* valuable and significant is that through comedy, the writer managed to "present people with alternatives to the stereotypes they usually see" (Conway 19). As well, "by making people laugh they act as a potential catalyst for causing them to question their prior assumptions" (Ibid). Whether this potential is realized and whether viewers question their assumptions is dependent not only on the viewers themselves, but on the value of identifying the formal and effective dimensions of humor; insight we gain into the mechanics of sitcoms and cultural assumptions. Different Muslim stand-up comics have the same message; for example, Obeidallah said in reference to Conway, "Our hope is that like other ethnic groups and races before us, we can use comedy to foster understanding about who we are and redefine ourselves in an accurate, positive way" (134). Sitcoms can activate "a productive type of polysemy: jokes said two things simultaneously, and their ironic meaning could draw their literal meaning into question" (141). Laugher allows viewers to engage with these contradictions. Thus, the writer of *Little Mosque on the Prairie* wants to convert the stereotypes into images of diversity and move Muslims from the realm of otherness to one of belonging.

> When people fall from reason into fear, it is much easier to go from fear to laughter than back to reason. There is a reason for that: while fear and reason belong to different spheres, fear and laughter (or pity, or love) share the same world of emotions. To restore reason, one emotion has to be undone by another emotion. This process of undoing the fall from reason requires catharsis (purification, purging of negative emotions). A bit of laugher can undo your fears and bring you back into the fold of rationality. This is the therapeutic function of comedy (and tragedy) that Aristotle argued for in his Poetics. Both tragedy and comedy, the philosopher argues, have a cathartic effect. They purify the soul and restore

> the balance of reason (Conway 26).

Although some jokes have an effect on viewers, they sometimes amplify their ability to question stereotypes, due to the jokes competing meanings. Viewers tend to favor one meaning over another, making their choices broader in the context of relationships.

Žižek describes his conception of the joke as "the surplus *jouissance*," which he argues that "enjoyment is not a pleasure." *Jouissance* is "surplus enjoyment that manifests as a strange fascination accompanied by uneasiness or discomfort" (Wood 4). Žižek explains the Rabinivitch joke, where a Jew called Rabinovich wants to emigrate, in the *Sublime Object of Ideology*.

> The bureaucrat at the emigration office asks him why; Rabinovitch answers: There are two reasons why. The first is that I'm afraid that in the Soviet Union the Communists will lose power, there will be a counter-revolution and the new power will put all the blame for the Communist crimes on us, Jews - there will again be anti-Jewish pogroms ... 'But, interrupts the bureaucrat, 'this is pure nonsense, nothing can change in the Soviet Union, the power of the Communists will last forever!' 'Well,' responds Rabinovitch calmly, 'that's my second reason' (Žižek 198).

This joke reveals that "the synthesis is exactly the same as the anti-thesis" (Žižek 199). This type of joke can be compared with the conflict resolution in *Little Mosque's* episode S1E2 where Baber (the conservative) decides to put a barrier (hockey board) to separate men and women during praying, claiming that women distract men while praying. While Rayyan, the feminist, demands they get rid of it, the traditional Muslim Fatima wants the barrier. The synthesis, whether or not to use the hockey board to separate men from women, is found to be funny because the compromise does not change the initial move to put up the board. By laughing at the situation (*jouissance*: enjoy), the audience normalizes the conservative initiative, finding it

"cute," while at the same time becoming open to rethinking the conservative position on separating men/women. This synthesis is different from the kind of dialectical paradox in *Homeland* used to reinforce the norms. "Cute" it may be, the conservative view also appears ridiculous. The situation is ridiculous but in a tolerable and understandable way. The sacred law is not torn apart, but embraced in laughter.

When looking at the examples from *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, we notice that both use so called "type characters," which in fictional literature means that the "authors use different types of characters to fulfill different roles in the narrative process" (Bernardo). For example, in *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, we can observe that the characters are funny. In *Homeland*, the type characters are complicated, but each type has its own limitations (as opposed to a wide variety of characteristics).

In literary terms, the kinds of type characters represented in *Homeland* are called "stock characters." Stock characters "are those types of characters who have become conventional or stereotypical through repeated use in particular types of stories. Stock characters are instantly recognizable to readers or audience members" (Bernardo). For example, in *Homeland*, the writer focuses on the stereotypical picture of Muslims as the enemy, as terrorists. The show portrays Muslims as crude and violent fanatics. At the same time, those characters still add complexity, depth and insight to the current stereotypical image of the Muslim opponent. This kind of depiction points to the acceptance of and challenge to stereotypes of Arab, Muslims, and Islam in a way where historically the norm has been the opposite.

The type characters in *Little Mosque* are in the category of symbolic characters. A symbolic character "is any major or minor character whose very existence represents some major idea or aspect of society" (Bernardo). Each episode deals with a different topic regarding

Muslims' lives, as shown in the previous examples of *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. Those ideas are mostly represented in a direct presentation, meaning that the reader already knows what the character says or does, which mimics how we understand people in the real world. From the choice of the writer/director to the actual production, the Canadian CBC demonstrates that it has a different ideology. *Little Mosque* is a left-wing fantasy as opposed to the conservative view of Fox Television.

Stereotypes about Arabs and Islamic peoples specifically are multitudinous and varied, and, like most stereotypes, often not based on fact. The fact is that "creating a simplified image of a particular group is a natural strategy for humans. But when this simplification mixes with misinformation, stereotypes become barriers to people understanding one another. Consequently, the responsibility to set the record straight falls on those who are best informed about Muslim culture and the lives of its members — in particular, those who follow the religion themselves" (Felter 2016). As previously mentioned, Jack Shaheen argues Arabs and Muslims are depicted as being nothing more than "brute murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, oil-rich dimwits" in American film and television (172). In *Homeland*, we see Muslims and Arabs depicted as being "corrupt rentiers sitting on oil wealth, or as hate-fueled maniacs" who desire nothing than the complete destruction of the West (Ibid). These portrayals are largely fabrications and oversimplifications of a complex reality (consisting of a handful of actual terrorists and an overwhelming majority of non-terrorists). *Homeland* works to construct an artificial, simplistic, homogenous reality. The characters in *Homeland* are stereotypical and one-dimensional; there is no context to portray those who may have different ideologies (which most definitely exist in reality). The media perpetuates these stereotypes by using 'us versus them'. Therefore, it is important to analyze the ways in which the Muslim community has been stigmatized, especially

as the misinformation, persecution, and vilification cause significant problems for Muslims in the United States and abroad from discrimination to massacre.

We must carefully consider and analyze the following: Can Arabs be depicted in a television show outside the context of terrorism/violence/villains? While this is asking a lot of a television show solely about the CIA and the external conflict climate, it certainly would be refreshing to see other depictions of Arabs that do not reinforce typical Orientalist stereotypes. Until we can see many diverse representations of Arabs, they are not receiving fair portrayals in the media. These stereotypes cannot simply be canceled out by positive portrayals of Arabs either. We need to bring attention to the continual reconstruction of these traditional Arab and Muslim stereotypes in the media in order to denaturalize them to the public.

Little Mosque on the Prairie and *Homeland* both have important aspects which explore the political, cultural, and ideological themes relating to Arabs/Muslims and Islam. The sitcom *Little Mosque* provides Canadians with education about various aspects of Islam, in addition to challenging long-held Orientalist stereotypes. The sitcom provides viewers with a glimpse into the lives of Canadian Muslims and shows how similar they are to non-Muslim Canadians. The differences in culture can create a boundary between societies and influence others to think stereotypically. The fact is that convenient stereotypes make the producer's job easier. Instead of spending hours developing new material, the writers can insert Arab or Muslim terrorist jokes that we all understand because of the mainstream media. We then expect the character created in that stereotypical image to be villainous, and to act in predictable, inhumane ways to destroy the West or a representation of it. It is becoming increasingly common for people to expect this from popular culture. We are no longer surprised by the stereotype; we are instead more likely to be surprised when it does not occur. It is a part of our unconsciously preconceived expectations.

The stereotypical definition of *Others* in this case, therefore, has powerful ideological consequences, including but not limited to simultaneously marginalizing 'them' and establishing, followed by maintaining, an explicit 'us versus them' boundary. According to Laila Al-Arian, an American Muslim journalist, "all the standard stereotypes about Islam and Muslims are reinforced, and it is demonstrated ad nauseam that anyone marked as 'Muslim' by race or creed can never be trusted" (Al-Arian, 2012). Inclusion and exclusion categories central to a nation's identity building process, as pointed out by Al-Arian, are subsequently established. This process, as it relates to popular media influences and the Arab people, leads only to one conclusion: race and religion are central to exclusion. The representation of Muslims and Islam in *Homeland* gives a visual to Muslims as antagonists.

Conclusion

Through my analysis of the two shows, I learn that in both shows stereotypes play a crucial role: one show reinforces it, and one reimagines it. I say "reimagine" because *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, although it challenged "stereotypes," still relies on type characters to form its representational schemes: conservative Muslims, Canadian born liberal Muslims, African Muslims, feminist Muslims, etc. As well, it is a fantasy in which conflicts are always resolved and everyone loves each other. There is no doubt that media has the power to manipulate the view of how we see things around us and our perception of others, but it is important to examine how the media portrays the characters, what it does to the audience and the perception of reality. What we perceive as reality is shaped by our ideologies. These ideologies are everywhere, even if the construction, and later presentation of them, is hidden in modern society. In the documentary *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, Žižek argues that "ideology is not an abstract doctrine imposed upon us from above—some political or religious 'ism' that is forced down our throats—but emerges from our deepest fantasies and beliefs. He argues that we enjoy our ideology because it feeds off our desires" (Eaghll 2014). Žižek ultimately makes the point that the only way we can change the world in the political and economic spheres is to "change the way we dream" (Ibid). Near the end of the film, he asks "how come it is easier for us to imagine the end of all life on earth—an asteroid hitting the planet—than a modest change to our economic order?" (*The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* 2012). Perhaps I may follow his example and ask, "how come it is easier for us to imagine a religion of terrorists – trying to destroy the Western people's way of life – than a modestly different religion that makes us rethink our everyday practice?"

For example, I analyze and evaluate how each show portrays the theme "terrorism". In *Homeland*, one of these scenes depicts the Middle Eastern city of Beirut, specifically Hamra Street, where machine-gun wielding militia are shown to be a terrorist enclave, giving the impression that terrorism is a general cultural problem in the Middle East, suggestively even disconnected from specific political contexts. In *Homeland*, the CIA agent Carrie "is forced to become a brunette and wear brown contact lenses during her trip there to avoid detection" (Al-Arian 2012). This depiction is not based on reality and does not take into account that Lebanon is a major tourist destination and is heavily westernized. This example shows how *Homeland* portrays Arabs through an Orientalist lens, which aims to present the Middle Eastern countries as exotic places filled with danger and intrigue. The audience, therefore, makes assumptions about deeper meanings that represent a cultural tension. As Žižek would say, this assumption confirmation feeds a deeper fantasy.

Through *Homeland* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, popular culture addresses different issues in order to create a fantasy world. These issues are then viewed in a new, more accepting light. The characters of Arabs/Muslims in *Homeland* who are considered the 'fantasy' according to Žižek's theory are created in order to achieve the desire within self. We use those fantasies to satisfy our ideas of others, which in this case are the stereotypes of Arabs/Muslims. In *Homeland* for example, the show portrays characters of respectable positions of Saudis who turned out to be terrorists. What the U.S. production has done in the first four seasons of *Homeland* is "misrepresented and sustained by subjects' fantasmatic imaginings of a persecutory Other supposed to enjoy" (like the Arabs/Muslims villains) (Sharpe). According to Žižek in reference to Brivic, "The formation of fantasy constitutes a situation in which satisfaction lies at a further level, in the hands of an unreachable other" (82). Popular culture is, whether viewers are

consciously aware of it or not, a guiding force in constructing fantasy, identity, and ideology; these fantasies in turn shape the society's biases and these biases shape individuals' conceptions. In this way, *Homeland* shapes the biases people have on their consciences in a way that will satisfy their desires.

Other than the ideological messages that *Homeland* uses to manipulate unwitting viewers, the images and music play a significant role in the audience's understanding of the world. Although the sights, sounds, places and people, as well as the contents/plots, cannot be separated in a TV show, the sounds/music has the power to make a scene more convincing and realistic. Also, the music can be used to go against what we see on the screen. For example, "To create a sense of irony, use happy music for a sad or scary scene. This is sometimes called contrapuntal music (as opposed to parallel music, which matches what happens on screen" ("Filmmaking"). Thus, when we encounter two different scenes with similar themes, we make incorrect assumptions about others and we believe that they are the truth. It is important to think more about how we see, what we know, what we imagine, and what we cognize in the representations with which we interact.

As a counterpoint, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*'s scene of "terrorism" differs greatly. The series begins with Muslims praying at the church. When a man enters the church and hears them saying "Allahu Akbar," he runs away and calls the terrorist attack hotline to report the Muslims. Later, the man meets Reverend Magee, who is responsible for the church and rents the Parish Hall to Muslims. Reverend Magee informs the man that Muslim people pray five times a day. Meanwhile, the new *Imam*, Amaar, is coming from Toronto to run the mosque. At the airport, he is arrested due to saying words such as "*it's* not like I dropped a bomb on them", "If Dad thinks it's suicide, then so be it"; and "This is Allah's plan for me. I'm not throwing my life

away. I'm moving to the prairies," while talking to his mother about his decision to leave his father's law firm and work as an *Imam* (S1E1). He was investigated but quickly released. The scene's setting provides a relatable, rich environment that allows for misunderstandings that can be construed in a humorous way. This example indicates the hilarious delivery of those issues considered Western misperceptions. Although both shows have the same theme, "terrorism", *Little Mosque* defuses hate with humor. Thus, how the media delivers/portrays such an issue is important for the audience as it interacts with the ideologies in their minds. Our own particular ideologies allow us to be manipulated by the clever minds behind the media, preventing us from seeing things from another perspective or how these ideologies can be harmful.

Ultimately, my analysis indicates signs of acceptance and a willingness to challenge stereotypes of Muslims and Islam in popular culture. Although *Homeland* in the first five seasons depicts Muslim peoples in a negative stereotypically expected way, the picture has changed positively continuing into season six. This is important because the stories that we experience, tell, and live, are not about facts but are about our values, fears and hopes. They are about how we live in a society we want to improve. Moving into the future, people will have a better understanding of the lives of Middle Eastern people through the characters created for these shows. Perhaps with time, a more tolerant view of those who have been demonized through stereotyped images in popular culture might evolve.

References

Abdulsalam, Rukaiyah Hill. *Women's Ideal Liberation: Islamic Versus Western Understanding*. Abul-Qasim Publishing Houe, 1998.

"A Farewell to Amaar." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 4, episode 17, CBC Television, 8 Mar. 2010.

Al-Arian, Laila. "TV's Most Islamophobic Show." *Salon*, 15 Dec. 2012, www.salon.com/2012/12/15/tvs_most_islamophobic_show/.

"A Lease Too Far." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 4, episode 18, CBC Television, 15 Mar. 2010.

Al-Khatahtbeh, Amani. *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2017.

Anderson, Nicole, et al. "Onscreen Muslims: Media, Identity, Terrorism, and Public Policy." *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, 2009 Annual Meeting, pp. 1-31. EBSCO*host*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=45286280&site=ehost-live.

Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Ballantine Books, 1993.

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History*. Random House Publishing Group, 2002.

"Baber Makes an Entrance." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 3, episode 18, CBC Television, 9 Mar. 2009.

Bannerji, Himani. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Canadian Scholars Press, 2010.

"Ban the Burqa." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 2, CBC Television, 10 Oct. 2007.

Beckwith, Ryan Teague. "Orlando Shooting: Read Donald Trump's Speech." *Time*, Time, 13 June 2016, time.com/4367120/orlando-shooting-donald-trump-transcript/.

Bernardo, Karen. "Characterization in Literature." *Lexiconic*, learn.lexiconic.net/characters.htm.

"Best Intentions." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 8, CBC Television, 28 Nov. 2007.

Brivic, Sheldon. *Joyce through Lacan and* Žižek*: Explorations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Bui, Lynh, et al. "At least 59 killed in Las Vegas shooting rampage, more than 500 others injured." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 2 Oct. 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/10/02/police-shut-down-part-of-las-vegas-strip-due-to-shooting/.

"CAIR's Condemnation of Terrorism." *CAIR - Council on American-Islamic Relations - CAIR*, 2015, www.cair.com/about-us/cair-anti-terrorism-campaigns.html.

Castonguay, James. "Fictions of Terror: Complexity, Complicity and Insecurity in Homeland." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2015, pp. 139–145., doi:10.1353/cj.2015.0045.

Chao, Jenifer. "Oppositional Banality: Watching Ordinary Muslims in 'Little Mosque on the Prairie'." *NECSUS*, 10 June 2015, necsus-ejms.org/oppositional-banality- watching-ordinary-muslims-in-little-mosque-on-the-prairie/.

Chesler, Phyllis. "France Is Brave and Right to Ban the Burqa." *Fox News*, FOX News Network, 7 May 2015, www.foxnews.com/opinion/france-is-brave-and-right-to-ban-the-burqa.

Combs, Cynthia C. *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge, 2016.

Conway, Kyle. *Little Mosque on the Prairie and the Paradoxes of Cultural Translation*. University of Toronto Press, 2017.

Cooper, Ryan. “Let's Stop Pretending That America Is the Land of Liberty.” *The Week - All You Need to Know about Everything That Matters*, The Week, 4 Dec. 2015, theweek.com/articles/592115/lets-stop-pretending-that-america-land-liberty.

Cunningham, Erin. “In Iran, Women Shed Headscarves to Protest Oppression.” *Press Herald*, 10 Mar. 2018, www.pressherald.com/2018/03/10/in-iran-women-shed-headscarves-to-protest-oppression/.

Drake, Kitty. “Veil Piece.” *Ladybeard*, www.ladybeardmagazine.co.uk/veil-piece/.

Duffett, Mark. *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

Durkay, Laura. “'Homeland' Is the Most Bigoted Show on Television.” *The Washington Post*, 2 Oct. 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/10/02/homeland-is-the-most-bigoted-show-on-television/?utm_term=.484f3393c3a8.

Eaghll, Tenzan. “Film Review: The Perverts Guide to Ideology.” *Religion Bulletin*, 15 Jan. 2014, bulletin.equinoxpub.com/2014/01/film-review-the-perverts-guide-to-ideology/.

Ebbitt, Kathleen. “Islam and Patriarchy - and Why It's Important to Understand.” *Global Citizen*, 6 Mar. 2015, www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/islam-and-patriarchy-and-why-its-important-to-unde/.

“Eid's a Wonderful Life.” *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 10, CBC Television, 12 Dec. 2007.

El Fadl, Khaled Abou. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*. HarperOne, 2007.

Ellis, Ralph, et al. "49 Killed in Florida Nightclub Terror Attack." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 13 June 2016, www.cnn.com/2016/06/12/us/orlando-nightclub-shooting/index.html.

El Saadawi, Nawal. "Capitalism and Fundamentalism Are Interdependent." *Sister-Hood Magazine. A Fuuse Production by Deeyah Khan.*, 11 July 2017, sister-hood.com/nawal-el-saadawi/capitalism-religious-fundamentalism-interdependent/.

English, Charlie. "Women of Timbuktu Find Their Voice Again after Nightmare of Jihadi Rule." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 25 Dec. 2014, www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/25/women-timbuktu-shape-city-future-mali.

Erickson, Amanda. "Trump Says Mosque Attack in Egypt Proves U.S. Needs Border Wall with Mexico. Is He Right?" *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 25 Nov. 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/25/trump-says-mosque-attack-in-egypt-proves-u-s-needs-border-wall-with-mexico-is-he-right/.

Erlanger, Steven. "Daughter of French Projects Fights for Them in Government." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 14 June 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/06/14/world/14amara.html.

Es, Margaretha A.Van. "Muslim Women as 'Ambassadors' of Islam: Breaking Stereotypes in Everyday Life." *Identities*, 26 July 2017, pp. 1–18., doi:10.1080/1070289x.2017.1346985.

Felter, Claire Elizabeth. "This Is What Muslim Women Want You To Know." *Bustle*, 24 Feb. 2016, www.bustle.com/articles/143795-this-is-what-muslim-women-want-you-to-know-video.

Fiennes, Sophie, James Wilson, Martin Rosenbaum, Katie Holly, and Slavoj Žižek. *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*. 2012.

"Filmmaking: Use Sound to Tell Your Story." *Learn about Film*, Learnaboutfilm Ltd, learnaboutfilm.com/film-language/sound/.

"From Che Vuoi? to Fantasy Lacan with Eyes Wide Shut." *How to Read Lacan*, 7 Apr. 2009, www.lacan.com/essays/?p=146.

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*. 8th ed., Prentic Hall, 2011.

"Grace." *Homeland*, created by Alex Gansa, et al., season 1, episode 2, Fox 21 Television Studios, 9 Oct. 2011.

Gardiner, Raleigh. "Desire and Fantasy: The Conditions of Reality between the Self and the Other." *Washington University Open Scholarship, Washington University in St. Louis*, 2014, openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=samfoxartetds.

Glover, Chris. "No-Fly List Headache May Soon Be over for This Canadian Boy and Others in the Same Boat." *CBC News*, 14 Aug. 2018, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canada-no-fly-list-proposed-changes-1.4784069.

"Grave Concern." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 1, CBC Television, 3 Oct. 2007.

Guzman, Dianne de. "A Man Made Racist Comments to a Woman in a Hijab. This Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf Refused to Serve Him." *SFGate*, San Francisco Chronicle, 13 May 2018, www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Coffee-Bean-Tea-Leaf-racist-headscarf-Muslim-woman-12911308.php.

Hall, Richard. “Lebanese Hit out over US Drama Homeland's 'Lies' in Depiction of Beirut.” *Independent*, 18 Oct. 2012, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/lebanese-hit-out-over-us-drama-homelands-lies-in-depiction-of-beirut-8217078.html.

Hamilton, Graeme. “Quebec Passes Bill Banning Niqab, Burka While Receiving Public Services.” *National Post*, 18 Oct. 2017, nationalpost.com/news/politics/quebec-passes-bill-62.

“Home Again.” *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 6, episode 1, CBC Television, 9 Jan. 2012.

“'Homeland' Is the Most Bigoted Show on Television.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 2 Oct. 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/10/02/homeland-is-the-most-bigoted-show-on-television/.

Hoodfar, Homa. *Between Marriage and the Market: Intimate Politics and Survival in Cairo*. University of California Press, 1997.

Høie, Gunhild Marie. “Challenging Stereotypes: How the Stereotypical Portrayal s of Muslims and Islam Are Challenged through the Enemies in Homeland ”*University of Oslo*, 2014, www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/40801/MA-thesis_HIE.pdf?sequence=1.

Ibrahim, Dina. “The Framing of Islam on Network News Following the September 11th Attacks.” *International Communication Gazette*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2010, pp. 111–125., doi:10.1177/1748048509350342.

"Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada." *Statistics Canada*, 2016, www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm.

"Irish Republican Army (IRA)." *Inside Gov by Graphiq*, 2017, terrorist-groups.insidegov.com/l/7540/Irish-Republican-Army#References&s=ref.

"Islam Means 'Peace'." *The Religion of Peace*, 2002, www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/myths/means-peace.aspx.

Jaafari, Shirin. "This Man Spent His Life Challenging Stereotypes of Arabs in Film and Television." *Public Radio International*, PRI, 18 July 2017, www.pri.org/stories/2017-07-18/man-spent-his-life-challenging-stereotypes-arabs-film-and-television.

Jenkins, Philip. *Laying Down the Sword: Why We Can't Ignore the Bible's Violent Verses*. Harpercollins, 2012.

"Jihad on Ice." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 12, CBC Television, 9 Jan. 2008.

Jiwani, Yasmin. "Doubling Discourses and the Veiled Other: Mediations of Race and Gender in Canadian Media." *States of Race: Critical Race Feminism for the 21st Century*, 1 July 2010.

Jordan, Mary. "Abortion Battles Are Heating up Ahead of November Midterms." *The Washington Post*, Apr. 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/politics/abortion-wars-are-heating-up-ahead-of-november-elections/2018/04/19/74c7b4ee-3d8f-11e8-974f-aacd97698cef_story.html?utm_term=.86208459356e.

Kearns, Erin, et al. “Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others?” *Papers Ssrn*, 7 Mar. 2017, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2928138.

“Keeping the Faith.” *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 4, episode 16, CBC Television, 1 Mar. 2010.

Keneally, Meghan. “Texas church shooting: How Trump's reactions to mass attacks differ for US-Born suspects like Devin Kelley.” *ABC News*, ABC News Network, 7 Nov. 2017, abcnews.go.com/US/texas-church-shooting-trumps-reaction-mass- attacks-differs/story?id=50962471.

Kim, Sue J. “The Ideological Fantasy of Otherness Postmodernism.” *Critiquing Postmodernism in Contemporary Discourses of Race*, 2009, pp. 9–45., doi:10.1057/9780230103962_2.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1981.

Lee, et al. “US Ties Iran to Plot to Assassinate Saudi Diplomat.” *Fox News*, 11 Oct. 2011, www.foxnews.com/us/us-ties-iran-to-plot-to-assassinate-saudi-diplomat.

“Let Prairie Dogs Lie.” *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 3, episode 6, CBC Television, 5 Nov. 2008.

“Little Mosque.” *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 1, episode 1, CBC Television, 9 Jan. 2007.

Lipka, Michael. “Muslims and Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world.” *Pew Research Center*, 9 Aug. 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/

Long, Colleen, and Pearson. "'Cowardly act of terror': Truck driver kills 8 on bike path." *Fox News*, FOX News Network, 1 Nov. 2017, www.foxnews.com/us/2017/10/31/police-respond-to-shots-fired-near-world-trade-center-site.html.

"Love at First Fight." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 5, episode 9, CBC Television, 28 Feb. 2011.

"Love Thy Neighbour." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 4, episode 1, CBC Television, 28 Sept. 2009.

"Lucky Day." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 4, CBC Television, 24 Oct. 2007.

Macfarlane, Emmett. "Quebec Law Banning Face Coverings Is Neither Neutral nor Constitutional: Opinion CBC News." *CBC News*, CBC/Radio Canada, 19 Oct. 2017, www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/quebec-neutrality-law-1.4360942.

"Mapping the Global Muslim Population." *Pew Research Center*, 7 Oct. 2009, www.pewforum.org/files/2009/10/Muslimpopulation.pdf.

Merelli, Annalisa. "'Lone Wolf' vs 'Terrorist': the Vocabulary of Mass Shootings." *Quartz*, Quartz, 3 Oct. 2017, qz.com/1092042/las-vegas-shooting-terrorist-vs-lone-wolf/.

Moore, Michael, director. *Where to Invade Next*. Toronto: Mongrel Media, 2015.

Muñoz , Gema Martín. "Islam's Women under Western Eyes." *OpenDemocracy*, 8 Oct. 2002, www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/article_498.jsp.

Muñoz, Gema Martín. "Patriarchy and Islam." *Germaine Tillion*, 1993, www.iemed.org/publicacions/quaderns/7/037_Martin.pdf.

"Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) condemns the attack in Edmonton." *Muslim Association of Canada (MAC),* 2012, www.macnet.ca/English/Pages/Home.aspx.

"Muslim Population in the U.S. 2007-2017." *Statista*, 2018, www.statista.com/statistics/786165/muslim-population-in-the-us/.

Neiwert, David. "Far-Right Extremists Have Hatched Far More Terror Plots than Anyone Else in Recent Years." *Reveal News*, 21 June 2017, www.revealnews.org/article/home-is-where-the-hate-is/.

"New Car Smell." *Homeland,* created by Alex Gansa, et al., season 2, episode 4, Fox 21 Television Studios, 21 Oct. 2012.

New International Version. Biblica, 2011. *Bible Gateway*, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2011

"No Fly List." *Little Mosque on the Prairie,* created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 2, episode 9, CBC Television, 5 Dec. 2007.

Obesity Update 2017 . www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2017.pdf.

Peek, Lori A. *Behind the Backlash: Muslim Americans after 9/11*. Temple University Press, 2011.

Perry, Barbara, and Scott Poynting. "Inspiring Islamophobia: Media and State Targeting of Muslims in Canada since 9/11" *Sociology For a Mobile World: Proceedings of the Annual Conference of The Australian Sociological Association*, Dec. 2006, citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.463.9103&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

Philpott, Daniel. "Are Muslim countries really unreceptive to religious freedom?" *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 10 July 2015,

www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/10/are-muslim-countries-really-unreceptive-to-religious-freedom/.

"Police-Reported hate crime, 2016." *Statistics Canada*, 2017, www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171128/dq171128d-eng.htm.

"Radio Silence." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 4, episode 15, CBC Television, 8 Feb. 2010.

"Representative Brody." *Homeland*, created by Alex Gansa, et al., season 1, episode 10, Fox 21 Television Studios, 4 Dec. 2011.

Rukavina, Steve. "Woman Ordered by Judge to Remove Hijab Seeks Clearer Rules." *CBCnews*, CBC/Radio Canada, 22 Sept. 2016, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/judge-hijab-el-alloul-1.3774084.

"Rules R Rules." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 3, episode 5, CBC Television, 29 Oct. 2008.

Saner, Emine. "'It Has Made Us Unsafe': Muslim Women on Fear and Abuse after Boris Johnson's Burqa Remarks ." *The Guardian*, 14 Aug. 2018, www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/14/unsafe-muslim-women-fear-abuse-boris-johnson-burqa.

"Saudi Women Appointed to the Consultative Council." *The Embassy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 11 Jan. 2013, www.saudiembassy.net/press-release/saudi-women-appointed-consultative-council.

Seraaj, Intisar, and Christina Zdanowicz. "Father forgives and hugs man involved in his son's killing." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 9 Nov. 2017,

www.cnn.com/2017/11/08/us/family-forgives-convict-pizza-delivery-driver-death-trnd/index.html.

Shaheen, Jack G. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Olive Branch Press, 2009.

Sharpe, Matthew. "Slavoj Žižek." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, www.iep.utm.edu/zizek/.

Shimpach, Shawn. *Television in Transition: The Life and Afterlife of the Narrative Action Hero*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind*. New American Library, 1963.

"Smooth Hate Criminal." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 5, episode 7, CBC Television, 7 Feb. 2011.

Spong, John Shelby. *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: a Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture*. HarperOne, an Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

Stacey, Aisha. "Women in Islam: Oppression or Liberation?" *The Religion of Islam*, 10 Dec. 2008, www.islamreligion.com/articles/1469/women-in-islam/.

Staff, Politico. "Donald Trump's Speech on Las Vegas Shooting." *Politico*, 2 Nov. 2017, Donald Trump's speech on Las Vegas shooting.

"Statement by the Prime Minister on Canadian Multiculturalism Day." *Prime Minister of Canada*, 27 June 2018, pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/06/27/statement-prime-minister-canadian-multiculturalism-day.

Strasser, Fred. "Islam, Culture and Sexism: Making Change with Religious Learning." *United States Institute of Peace*, 3 Nov. 2015,

www.usip.org/publications/2015/11/islam-culture-and-sexism-making-change-religious-learning.

"Swimming Upstream." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 1, episode 4, CBC Television, 6 Feb. 2007.

"Terminology to Define the Terrorists: Recommendations from American Muslim." *Homeland Security*, Jan. 2008, www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/dhs_crcl_terminology_08-1-08_accessible.pdf.

"Thought and Mind Control." *Quotes on Intellectual Freedom and Censorship*, 26 Jan. 2007, www.ifla.org/FR/node/9379.

"The Barrier." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 1, episode 2, CBC Television, 17 Jan. 2007.

"The Proposal." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 5, episode 1, CBC Television, 3 Jan. 2011.

"The Smile." *Homeland*, created by Alex Gansa, et al., season 2, episode 1, Fox 21 Television Studios, 30 Sept. 2012.

"The Veil and a New Muslim Identity." *Facing History and Ourselves*, 2018, www.facinghistory.org/civic-dilemmas/veil-and-new-muslim-identity.

"The Weekend." *Homeland*, created by Alex Gansa, et al., season 1, episode 7, Fox 21 Television Studios, 13 Nov. 2011.

"The Week of Dying Dangerously." *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarqa Nawaz, season 3, episode 13, CBC Television, 26 Jan. 2009.

"Uh... Oh... Ah..." *Homeland*, created by Alex Gansa, et al., season 3, episode 2, Fox 21 Television Studios, 6 Oct. 2013.

Veeren, Elspeth Van. “Interrogating24: Making Sense of US Counter-Terrorism in the Global War on Terrorism.” *New Political Science*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2009, pp. 361– 384., doi:10.1080/07393140903105991.

“Verse Al-‘Ankabut.” *Quran 29:46*, quran.com/29/46.

“Verse Al-‘Ankabut.” *Quran 29:6*, quran.com/29/46.

“Verse Ali 'Imran.” *Quran 3:19, quran.com/3/19.*

“Verse Al-Ma'idah.” *Quran 5:32*, quran.com/5/32-42.

“Verse Ar-Ra’d.” *Quran 13:11*, quran.com/5/32-42.

Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: a Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Abingdon Press, 1996.

Williams, Jennifer. “White American Men Are a Bigger Domestic Terrorist Threat than Muslim Foreigners.” *Vox.com*, Vox Media, 2 Oct. 2017, www.vox.com/world/2017/10/2/16396612/las-vegas-mass-shooting-terrorism-islam.

Willingham, AJ. “Hate crimes rose in 2016 - especially against Muslims and whites.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 15 Nov. 2017, www.cnn.com/2017/11/14/us/hate-crimes-muslim-white-fbi-trnd/index.html.

Wood, Kelsey. *Zizek: A Readers Guide*. John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2012.

Wright, Robert. *The Evolution of God*. Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

Yan, Holly, and Dakin Andone. “Who Is New York Terror Suspect Sayfullo Saipov?” *CNN*, 2 Nov. 2017, www.cnn.com/2017/11/01/us/sayfullo-saipov-new-york-attack/index.html.

Zine, Jasmin. *Islam in the Hinterlands: Muslim Cultural Politics in Canada*. UBC Press, 2012.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso, 1989.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Plague of Fantasies*. Verso, 2009.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*. Verso, 2013.

Žižek, Slavoj. " Slavoj Zizek Answers Peter Murphy." *Lacan*, 10 July 2001, www.lacan.com/reflections2.htm.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Slavoj Žižek: What Our Fear of Refugees Says about Europe." *New Statesman*, 29 Feb. 2016, www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/02/slavoj-zizek-what-our-fear-refugees-says-about-europe.